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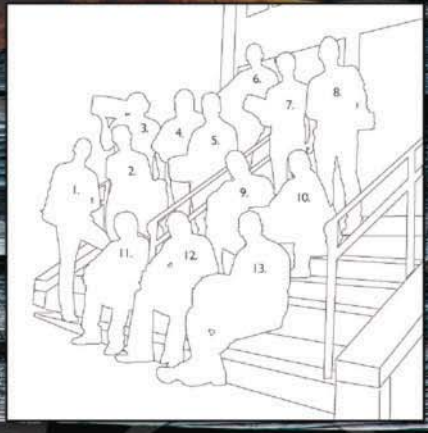

FEATURED DRUMMERS:

1. Al Wilson, *Taylor Swift*
(w/ Black Beauty)
2. Chris Kimmerer, *Steven Curtis Chapman*
(w/ Black Magic Engraved)
3. Greg Morrow, *Studio*
(w/ Epic Centurion Walnut/Maple)
4. Justin Meeks, *James Otto*
(w/ Supraphonic)
5. Tony Hammons, *Montgomery Gentry*
(w/ Black Magic Engraved)
6. Ron Gannaway, *Gretchen Wilson*
(w/ Epic Centurion Bubinga)
7. Steve Misamore, *Dierks Bentley*
(w/ Element SE)
8. Todd Trent, *Trash Daddy*
(w/ Legacy Classic)
9. David Parks, *Lo Cash Cowboys*
(w/ Chrome Over-Brass Supraphonic)
10. Jon "Bermuda" Schwartz, *"Weird Al" Yankovic*
(w/ Epic X-Over)
11. Vincent Dee, *Independent*
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12. Jim Riley, *Rascal Flatts*
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FEATURES

42 SUICIDE SILENCE'S **ALEX LOPEZ**

Over-the-top rock? Minimalist metal? Who cares what bag they put him in—Suicide Silence's drummer has chops, and he knows how to use 'em.

46 THE FLAMING LIPS' **KLIPH SCURLOCK** AND **STEVEN DROZD**

The unfamiliar beats and tones of the Lips' trailblazing new studio album, *Embryonic*, were born from double-drummer experiments conducted in an empty house. How the timekeepers in rock's most exploratory band define *invention*.

58 KUDU'S **DEANTONI PARKS**

Once known as a drum 'n' bass pioneer, the rhythmic phenom is harder than ever to pigeonhole. But for sheer bluster, attitude, and uniqueness on the kit, look no further.

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14 UPDATE
TESLA'S **TROY LUCCKETTA**
ARK'S **JOHN MACALUSO**
JACKYL'S **CHRIS WORLEY**

16 GIMME 10!
BOBBY SANABRIA

36 SLIGHTLY OFFBEAT
ERIC FISCHER

38 A DIFFERENT VIEW
PETER CASE

76 PORTRAITS
MUTEMATH'S **DARREN KING**
MARK SHERMAN QUARTET'S **TIM HORNER**

80 WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT...?
EDGAR WINTER'S **BOBBY RAMIREZ**

WIN One Of Four Amazing Prize Packages From Tycoon Percussion! page 93

EDUCATION

64 CONCEPTS
PUTTING THE MUSIC FIRST 5 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR DRUMMING MORE MEANINGFUL by Marko Djordjevic

66 STRICTLY TECHNIQUE
THE SIXLET A MULTI-USE HAND/FOOT PATTERN FOR ALL DRUMMERS by Jim Riley

68 IN THE POCKET
ADVANCED FUNK DRUMMING IN DEPTH PART 3: FORGET ABOUT THE BACKBEAT by Jim Payne

70 ROCK PERSPECTIVES
POLYRHYTHMS PART 5: SUPERIMPOSED HALF-TIME FEELS by Rod Morgenstein

72 RUDIMENTAL SYMPOSIUM
AN EAR-BASED ALTERNATIVE TO STANDARD NOTATION by Pat Petrillo

DEPARTMENTS

8 AN EDITOR'S OVERVIEW
KNOW NO LIMITS by Michael Dawson

10 READERS' PLATFORM

12 ASK A PRO
THE MANHATTAN TRANSFER'S **STEVE HASS**

18 IT'S QUESTIONABLE
WHAT ARE KENT DRUMS? • HEEL PAIN

84 SHOWCASE

86 DRUM MARKET

88 CRITIQUE

92 BACKBEATS
MEINL DRUM FESTIVAL 2009 • MONTREAL DRUM FEST 2009

94 IN MEMORIAM
AVENGED SEVENFOLD'S JAMES "THE REV" SULLIVAN

96 KIT OF THE MONTH
LET THE WILD RUMPUS START!

EQUIPMENT

20 PRODUCT CLOSE-UP
- **GRETSCH** RENOWN PUREWOOD OAK DRUMSET
- **ISTANBUL AGOP** EPOCH, OM, WARONKER, AND CHAMBERLAIN CYMBALS
- **JOYFUL NOISE DRUM COMPANY** TKO SEAMLESS BRASS AND LEGACY FLAMED BIRCH SNARES

26 ELECTRONIC REVIEW
KORG WAVEDRUM

28 NEW AND NOTABLE

32 MD PRODUCT SHOOTOUT!
CAJONS

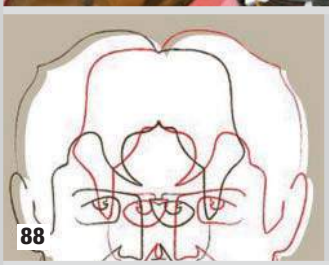
34 GEARING UP
- AMERICAN IDOLS LIVE/USHER'S **AARON SPEARS**
- TOWER OF POWER'S **DAVID GARIBALDI**

20

26

28

34
Sayre Berman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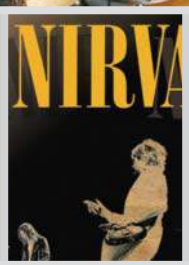

94
Adam Leota

KNOW NO LIMITS

Not to get too heady on you, but I've been spending a lot of time thinking about thought lately, about how what we perceive to be right or wrong, possible or impossible, plays a major role in the decisions we make, both in our personal lives and in our practice rooms. For instance, I remember the moment in high school when I declared, "I'll never be able to play like Vinnie Colaiuta. I'm more a groove drummer." (This was when I was deep in a Chad Smith–wannabe period.) Looking back, that simple statement—as naive as it may have been—changed everything. No longer did I have to put so much pressure on myself to keep up with what the super-drummers of the world were doing. I was now free to jam out to the Meters as much as I wanted, while also leaving a little time to dabble in all the challenging technique stuff that was being explored by the Vinnies, Virgils, and Weckls of the world.

What I didn't realize, however, was that as liberating as I *thought* it was not to have to spend all my waking hours practicing four-limb polyrhythms, left-foot clave, and 32nd-note hand/foot fills, what I had inadvertently done was set a limit to how far I could go with my drumming. I also didn't consider the fact that playing Ndugu Chancler's beat to "Billie Jean" spot on for five minutes straight was just as challenging, if not more so, than catching all the syncopated hits in Weckl's "Tower Of Inspiration."

The truth is, I really *did* want to play like Vinnie Colaiuta. I was just afraid that even if I practiced day and night toward my goal of achieving Vinnie-like chops and complete musical freedom, I still wouldn't be "good enough" to go out and make it as a professional drummer. In hindsight, I understand that these boundaries were self-imposed and completely irrational. After all, I had the same physical tools as Vinnie—two arms, two hands, two legs—so if I *really* wanted to learn "The Black Page," there was no reason why I couldn't. I also had to let go of my insecurities and understand that there's never a point when you have all the answers and skills you need to be successful. As business coach and best-selling author John Assaraf once said in an interview for the Web site TheMastersOfTheSecret.com, "If you're going to wait until you have all the blueprints ready and you have all the tools and the nuts and bolts, you are never going to build anything."

What inspired me to go down this Stuart Smalley–like path of self-affirmation ("I'm good enough, I'm smart enough…") and creative goal setting were two of the stories featured in this issue. Cover artist Steven Drozd is a bona fide musical genius, not to mention one of the best rock drummers around. But the world didn't quite agree back in 1994, when the Flaming Lips were seen by many as little more than a goofy alt-rock band that sang songs about jelly. Flash forward sixteen years, and the Lips are at the top of every music critic's list of bands worth paying attention to. Do you think Steven had any doubts along the way that his band and his playing were good enough? Heck, he even had enough confidence to pass the sticks to super-fan Kliph Scurlock so he could step up front to play guitar and keyboard (in a headless pink bunny suit, nonetheless). Similarly, New York City drummer Deantoni Parks has made no creative concessions while fulfilling his vision of becoming the man-machine player of the new millennium. After reading his forward-thinking comments, check out the ridiculous beats he concocted for the 2003 disc by Astroid Power-Up!, *Google Plex*. Then go work on becoming the drummer you always wanted to be.

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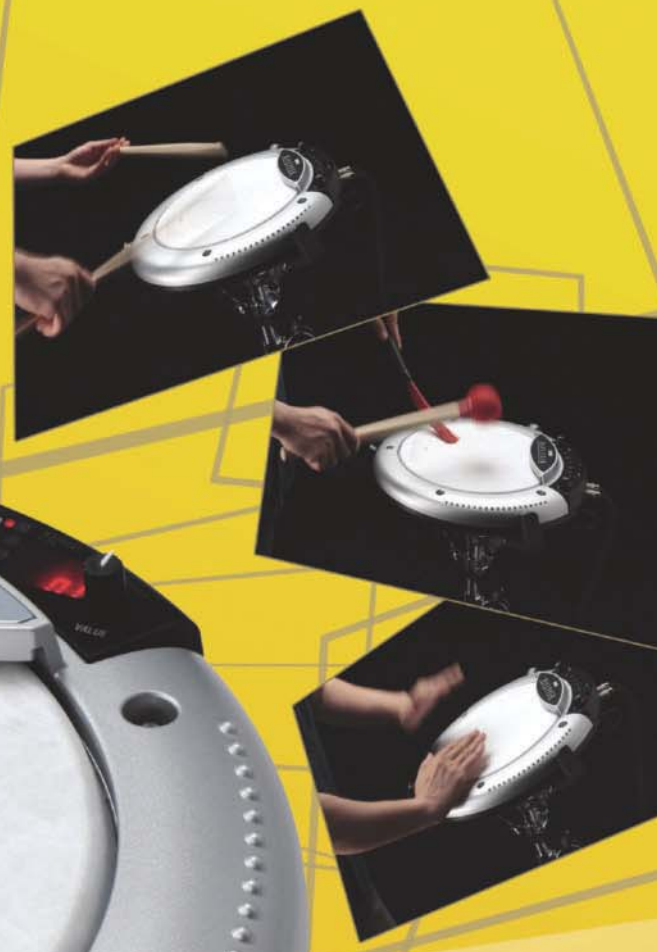

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DECEMBER *MD*

I reside in Sofia, Bulgaria, and work as a sports journalist/anchor. I also play the drums. Thank you very much for the content of the December '09 issue. It's been great reading the stories of some of the world's most influential drummers. I had the chance here in Bulgaria to watch *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno* featuring Marvin Smith on the drums and also *Late Night With Conan O'Brien* with Max Weinberg. Thank you very much, *MD*, for being the institution you are.

Wladimir Tzinguilev

COLLECTORS CORNER'S HARRY CANGANY

MD has a consummate professional in Harry Cangany. One of the reasons I keep reading and buying *MD* is that I love his articles. I'm writing a research paper for an arts class for my bachelor's degree on drums, percussion, and how music impacts people, and Harry was very kind in providing me with information. In fact, he went above and beyond for me. It's nice to see that there are still professional, approachable people in the music magazine field. You know the old saying that strangers are friends you've never met before? This would definitely describe Harry to a T.

Mike McAvoy

TOP 10 RUDIMENTS

Since Bill Bachman started his Strictly Technique "Top 10 Rudiments" series, getting *MD* has been even more of a waiting game than usual. Toward the end of every month I am usually checking the mailbox, wondering what hot drummer will be featured. But now when an issue appears I rip off the plastic and turn straight to see not only what the rudiment is this month but also what amazing new insights and analysis Bill has this time. I thought I had the rudiments under control, but as soon as Bill's series started I saw a whole new world open up. His deconstruction of the sticking and subsequent reassembly in unexpected ways creates a fresh and illuminating lesson on something that can be a bit of a grind when you do it the old way. Whereas I previously gritted my teeth and plunged into hours of not-very-satisfying repetition, now I work my way through the sequence of exercises with a sense of exploration and discovery. Just about every month there is at least one "Aha!" moment on a rudiment that I previously thought I understood. I would like to thank and congratulate Bill Bachman for a fantastic set of articles, which will be staying on my music stand for a long time.

Peter Butler

MIND MATTERS

I really like your magazine, and one of my favorite columns is Mind Matters by Bernie Schallehn. He really knows his stuff and writes in a very easy-to-read way—and he's often funny. It seems as if he's writing to me, because many times I think, *Yeah, that's MY problem*, and by following his advice I'm able to work it out quickly. Thank you for such a practical, interesting magazine.

Bob Moore

DRUM-AROUND

Thank you for including the Drum-Around in the January issue. I should note that the Drum-Around

bolts to the existing seat hardware and not to the seat post. I should have made that clearer in my press release.

Vaughn Sligh
SixStix Studios

PHIL AND DOM AREN'T THE ONLY BRITISH LEFTIES

Just wanted to point out that writer Ilya Stemkovsky and Muse's Dominic Howard failed to mention Deep Purple's Ian Paice when talking about left-handed British rock drummers in your January cover story. Give Paicey his due!

Will Jaeger

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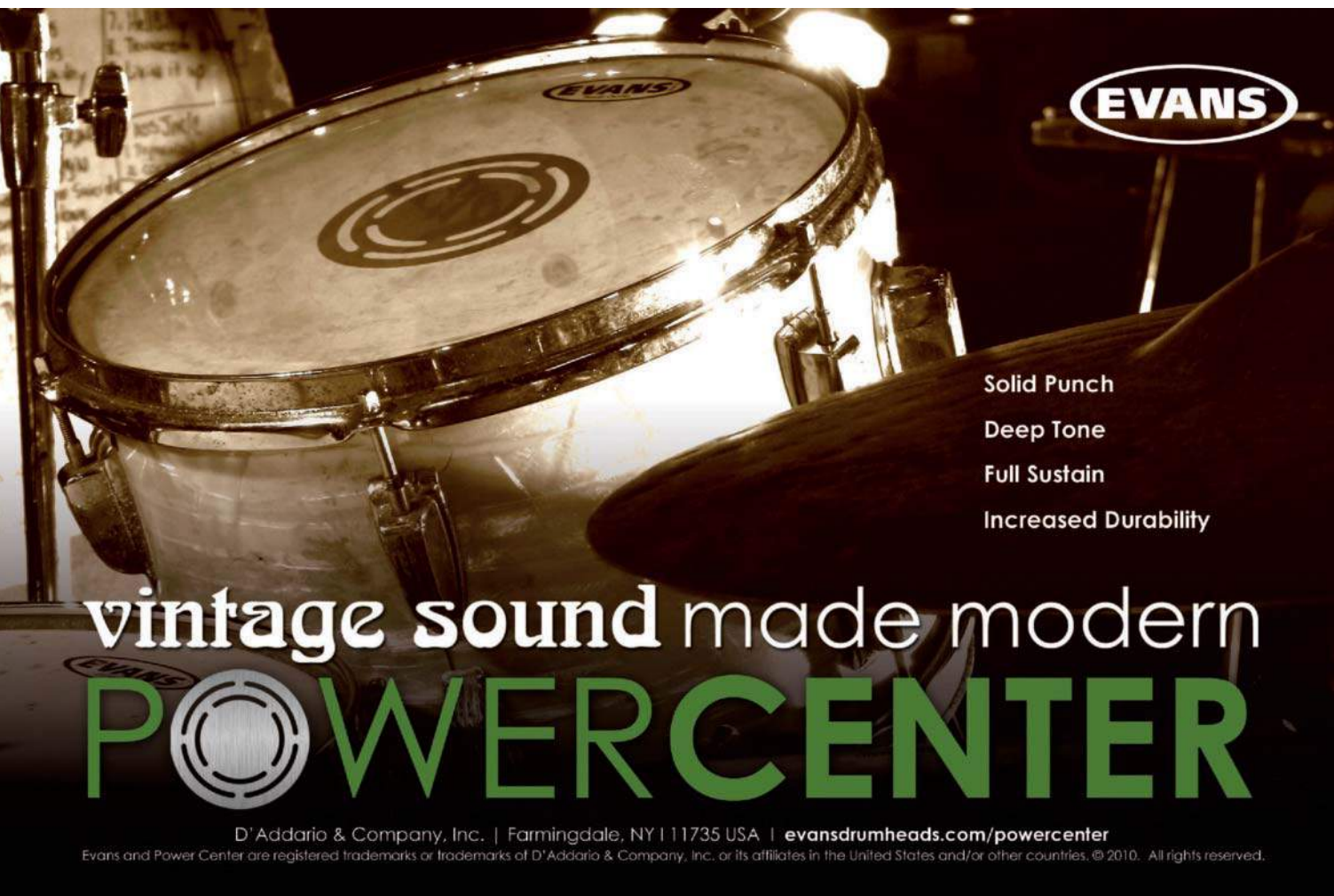
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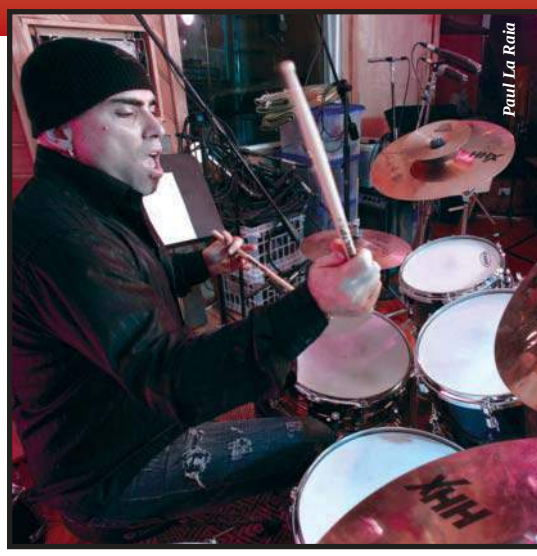

I saw you perform with the Manhattan Transfer at the Dakota in Minneapolis. I was expecting to hear some great vocal jazz. What I got was a lesson on how to play drums behind vocalists. Your musicality, time, and dynamics really amazed me. How did you develop such confident and consistent time? My time often wavers in situations where the other musicians don't lock up with my beat.

Your dynamics were impeccable. I've seen many bands play the Dakota, and usually the drums overpower the band. You played that room like no one I have ever heard. Every lyric was crystal clear. You never played over mezzo forte [moderately loud], yet the energy and content of your drumming was still driving the band. How do you work on dynamics? Do you use lighter sticks or different cymbals depending on the size of the venue?

You also played a very tasty double bass pattern during your trades with the pianist, which consisted of some odd groupings. Do you remember what that was? I would love to see it written out. Thanks for the inspiration!
Mike Steinman

Thanks for the kind words, Mike. It's nice to know there are people out in the audience really listening.

My concept behind playing time is simple: Lay down a comfy carpet for everyone to walk on. Whether they walk off the carpet, hover at the edge, or stay in the middle is a musical choice they must make. When a song has a tempo marking of 104 bpm, I play it at 104. If the chorus needs a nudge, I'll play on top. If the bridge needs to lay back, I'll play behind. But the tempo will remain at 104. Of course, I'm not a machine, but I do my best to keep that kind of consistency.

There are exceptions, though, and some gigs require looser playing. In an improvisational jazz setting, there's usually no need for super-strict time playing. But situations where the musicians are not hooking up with the drums are simply beyond your control. Just lay down that carpet.

My advice to anyone who's working on developing consistent time is to practice with a metronome and to record yourself. Make mental notes of what you're playing when you're rushing or dragging, and then take appropriate measures in your practice routine to fix the problem. For example, I've noticed that when some of my students bounce 8th notes on the hi-hat with the foot, they rush. Once this problem is identified, it can be repaired.

The first time I played with pianist Danilo Perez, his advice to me was invaluable. He said, "Man, what you're playing is beautiful. But if you can play with that same intensity at half the volume, your phone will never stop ringing." He was right. I believe you have to mix yourself accordingly and play to the room. Regardless of genre, I play each room differently. In small clubs and sensitive theaters, I'll never reach a volume of forte [loud] while the ensemble is playing. In bigger theaters and arenas, I'll play with more volume and power. I adjust my dynamic range as if I'm the front-of-house engineer.

As far as drumsticks, I use the Regal Tip 8A hickory. For low-volume gigs, I use the 8A maple. The size of the stick is the same, but the weight is slightly lighter. In volume-sensitive situations I play my backbeat lighter and in the center of the snare drum without hitting a rimshot. (I typically play backbeats as rimshots.) At the Dakota, I also used a Yamaha plastic muffling ring to help control the sound.

My cymbal choice has nothing to do with volume. I believe you should be able to control your cymbals and drums in order to play in the desired dynamic range. The Dakota is a very sensitive room. That evening, people paid good money to see and hear the Manhattan Transfer sing. I had to make sure to keep up the intensity and groove without getting in the way of the vocals. In venues like the Dakota, I begin soundcheck without a monitor. I try to keep a dynamic range that allows me to hear all the instruments acoustically. The night you saw me, I had only a drum loop and my Roland sampler coming through my monitor. When people approached me after the show saying it sounded like a recording, I felt I had done my job.

Do I practice my dynamics? Actually, no. That's something that has been learned on the job. Playing louder when the music becomes intense is normal—it's human. My suggestion is to try to control your dynamic range so you have more headroom when the music becomes intense.

Regarding the trading, I don't usually remember anything specific that I play in solos or trades. But you said the key words: double bass. I'm new to double bass, and I have limited capabilities with the double pedal. So that narrows it down for me. I'm not sure exactly what I played, but it was something like the following example. The tempo is 128 bpm. (And be sure to make note of the dynamics.) For this pattern I lead with my left hand and left foot and play single strokes. But you can do whatever feels good. I also improvise the orchestration in my hands. I usually divide the hands between the toms and snare. It's written on just snare drum, leaving the orchestration up to you. Have fun!

Ed Thigpen

1930 - 2010

Renowned as a great drummer and a musician of taste, Ed Thigpen will, above all, be remembered as a wonderful person whose generosity and music enhanced our lives.

TESLA'S TROY LUCCKETTA

Eternal student, **eternal pro**

Since 1986, Tesla drummer Troy Luccketta and his bandmates have toured the world and visited the charts with hits like "Modern Day Cowboy," "Heaven's Trail (No Way Out)," and the acoustic remake of "Signs." Despite such success, however, Luccketta says he views himself as a student, continuously educating himself about the drums, the recording process, and life in general.

Luccketta recently focused his energies beyond rock drumming by taking college-level percussion courses at Mesa Community College with famed Latin-jazz drummer/educator Dom Moio. "Now I have my pop and my slap together on congas," Troy says, "and I can utilize different hand tones like the dead and open pulse.

"I constantly work and study and practice and listen," he continues. "I just got out of a session where I did some brushwork. I'm recording, making records, touring, and attending drum festivals, and all of that helps make you a pro."

A scan of drumming message boards confirms that many players consider Luccketta's sound with Tesla a signature one. "That's a compliment to hear from people," Troy says. "It's interesting, because one thing I pride myself on is being able to step outside of myself by being a student. And by doing sessions and other records I've been able to switch gears and change that signature sound at times."

Luccketta is full of practical road-learned advice, but he cites a metamorphosis he experienced over fifteen years ago as the thing that truly set him on the right path. "My real development as a musician started in 1991, when I checked myself into rehab," he explains. "I continue to respect what I have, work toward furthering my growth, and show my appreciation for my talents and what I've been given. I do *not* take that for granted."

Through session work with people like guitar slingers Ronnie Montrose and Marc Bonilla and years spent touring and playing the drums for a living, Luccketta has reached some conclusions about life and drumming that he lives by daily. "Care about people and not just drumming," he says. "Never forsake who you are. As a drummer you want to develop that Steve Gadd, Jeff Porcaro mentality. They always brought aspects of themselves into their playing, and that's what I try to do in every situation."

Steven Douglas Losey

BREAKOUT BEATS

In 1986, during the peak of hair-band mania, Tesla's debut album, *Mechanical Resonance*, was a breath of fresh air in the hard rock community. Cuts like "Modern Day Cowboy" and "2 Late 4 Love" delivered much more than Tesla's peers, both musically and lyrically. Drummer Troy Luccketta brought blues, country, and hard rock stylings to the proceedings and contributed to the songwriting as well.

JOHN MACALUSO

The "Ark" of a shredding journeyman's career

John Macaluso's playing days haven't lacked for milestones. The affable New Yorker has manned the drum throne for many respected artists over the years, recording or touring with Yngwie Malmsteen, Trans-Siberian Orchestra/Savatage six-stringer Chris Caffery, and melodic metallers TNT, among others. In 2007 he wrote and produced an acclaimed solo album, John Macaluso & Union Radio's *The Radio Waves Goodbye*, which features contributions from friends like Dream Theater vocalist James LaBrie (with whom Macaluso toured in support of the singer's *Elements Of Persuasion* CD).

Despite these accomplishments, Macaluso is most proud of his work with Ark, the band he and guitarist Tore Ostby formed last decade. "That's my baby," he says. So the drummer's excitement is understandable as he discusses springtime plans for recording the first new Ark material since 2002's *Burn The Sun*.

In the 1990s, Macaluso and Ostby were touring with established groups, but despite the visibility the gigs afforded, both players felt musically restrained. "I wanted a band where we could stretch out and do anything, but keep it accessible," Macaluso says. "A 'no rules' kind of band."

In 1999, Ark's eponymous debut was released, with Jorn Lande on vocals. That album and its follow-up, *Burn The Sun*, dazzled listeners by blending raw rock passion, soaring choruses, Macaluso's stuttering "Morse code" double bass work, frenzied drum 'n' bass explosions, and the occasional Björk-inspired vocal melody. The band, which former Rainbow vocalist Joe Lynn Turner described as "AC/DC plays prog," began to build an enthusiastic fan base, but logistical and personal problems led to a hiatus. "After five years, though," Macaluso says, "I started thinking, *What are we doing?* People were still emailing me, asking when the new Ark album was coming out." So he and Ostby reestablished contact to begin work on their next opus.

Once the new songs are demoed, the band will head to Germany to work with *Burn The Sun* producer Tommy Newton on the album, which is expected to be ready for a fall 2010 release. Macaluso says the songs should satisfy new and old fans alike, with material ranging from atmospheric, drum-driven pieces to straight-ahead rockers capable of eliciting banging from even the most recalcitrant head. "We'll still have bluesy vocals, and it will still be ballsy," Macaluso says. "It's the same kind of thing as the first two albums, but we've grown."

The drummer can't wait to take Ark to various ports of call. ("We want to tour, tour, tour—just go crazy on the road," he says.) And if Ark's resurgence isn't enough, Macaluso has also been making forays into production and taking on additional studio work. As a producer, he recently helmed the boards for Creation's End. Besides bringing in Riot/Masterplan singer Mike DiMeo to lend his vocal prowess, Macaluso helped fine-tune the arrangements and melodies. To develop his melodic skills, he says he drove around listening to contemporary pop music. "I'm using pop hooks in metal, and it works."

Macaluso has found that his drumming background helps his efforts in the producer's booth. "Drummers make great producers," he says. "We understand song structures, and we're used to guiding bands." Sometimes this guidance results in trimming down unwieldy songs into more manageable forms. "I'd use what they called my lobster claws," John says, "and clip out unnecessary parts to help turn a ten-minute song into a four-minute song that could play on the radio but still showcases the band's chops."

Macaluso, who has appeared on more than two hundred albums, has also been hitting the studio with increased frequency, with six new releases in the pipe. Along the way, he found a method for getting the most out of each take. "I don't like to get the songs several weeks in advance," he says. "I like to

JACKYL'S CHRIS WORLEY

Twenty years on, still letting it rip

Channeling the powerful, streamlined style favored by drummers like AC/DC's Phil Rudd and Mötley Crüe's Tommy Lee has always been Chris Worley's specialty. Starting in 1992 with Jackyl's self-titled debut release, Worley has played on hard-rocking tracks like "I Stand Alone," "The Lumberjack," and "Down On Me," all while keeping it simple and forming a bedrock for each song. "Your normal music fan is not typically a musician," the drummer says. "They like the energy of a song more than the technical side."

Worley has never had trouble summoning his inner rock star while on stage. "I demand that people look at me," he says. "The performance aspect is very important. I like technical guys like Daniel Adair from Nickelback, but cats like Tommy Lee and Tommy Aldridge lean more on live performance, and that's what I do. When I play there's a lot of energy there. It causes people to ask where I get my energy and charisma."

Early on, when Jackyl was discovered by the legendary Geffen A&R man John Kalodner, Worley was still learning what it took to be a pro drummer. "I had never been in the studio," he says. "We were signed to Geffen without having any type of recording, and all I knew about playing the drums was based on playing live. Kalodner told me, 'You're gonna have to learn to play with a click track.'"

Nearly twenty years after "The Lumberjack"—featuring a chainsaw solo courtesy of singer Jesse James Dupree—was an MTV staple, Worley and his mates prepare to release their latest opus, *When Moonshine And Dynamite Collide*. The disc serves as a testament to live-sounding drums and the spontaneous combustion Jackyl generates. Whether it's the straightforward single "My Moonshine Kicks Your Cocaine's Ass" or the jungle rhythms of "Get Mad At It," the band strikes a raw chord, and that's how they like it. "We mostly write on the road, because that's where songs come from anyway," Worley says. "We record live all the time, and we don't isolate things. We capture things much better that way."

Jackyl has consistently spent more than 300 days a year on the road, on tours with Kiss, ZZ Top, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and other heavyweights. In 1998 the band surpassed George Thorogood & the Destroyers in the *Guinness Book Of World Records* with a hundred performances in fifty days, in twenty-seven states. Worley is happy that the quartet manages to keep the set feeling new each night. "We don't even have a song list anymore," he says. "I know what's coming the first two songs, but after that, watch out. We keep it fresh on stage, and Jesse does his thing. It's very spontaneous."

Steven Douglas Losey

BREAKOUT BEATS

In 1992, prior to the onslaught of alternative rock, Jackyl's eponymous debut record sold 135,000 units. Featuring the chainsaw-inspired song "The Lumberjack," the disc served as a launching pad for the band, introducing the masses to a unit whose sound had been honed on stage. *Jackyl* marked Chris Worley's first trek into the studio, and when the drummer overplayed, producer Brendan O'Brien (Pearl Jam, AC/DC, Audioslave) simply said, "Play straight through everything." The success of the album prompted Ludwig to construct a custom set that Worley dubbed "red chemical drums"; it featured two 14x24 kicks that had been melded together. "Over the years I've gotten brand-new sets that are the same sizes with the same heads and the same wood, but they just don't sound the same," Chris says.

BREAKOUT BEATS

John Macaluso wasn't exactly an unknown quantity in 2002, having already made his percussive bones with Yngwie Malmsteen, TNT, and a host of others. But the message boards and forums really lit up with the release of Ark's *Burn The Sun*. Macaluso's unconventional approach to prog-metal, featuring nimble double bass licks, frighteningly fast hands, and a knack for unleashing just the right fill at just the right time, caused the collective jaw of drummers around the globe to drop in awe and respect. The metallicized breakbeats on the track "Absolute Zero" alone provide ample practice-room fodder for aspiring prog rockers.

go into the studio, listen to a song a few times, talk it over with the band, and take it from there." This has resulted in more creative, less formulaic drumming on his part, he adds.

The drummer also teaches a full roster of students and is developing an instructional DVD that uses character-based systems to teach rhythms to anyone interested in expanding his or her musical vocabulary. As a result of all this activity, Macaluso has little spare time. "But that's okay," he says. "I get into trouble when I'm not drumming."

James Buckley

OUT NOW ON CD

Chris Tomson is on the latest from Vampire Weekend, *Contra*. Says the drummer, "The band sounds more like Vampire Weekend on this one than we did on our first record. On the song 'Run' I experimented with certain rhythms that I avoided on the first record. I like how this song alternates between heavy, rock-like choruses and reggaeton verses."

Gustav Schäfer is on Tokio Hotel's new one, *Humanoid*, which he describes as having "a bit more of an electronic sound" than the band's previous studio albums. "To create new drum sounds," Schäfer tells *MD*, "I played many of the songs on an e-drumset. I'm thinking about using the new sounds for our live show as well and actually being on stage with two drumsets."

ALSO ON THE SHELVES

ARTIST/ALBUM	DRUMMER
The Whigs: *In The Dark*	**Julian Dorio**
David Bowie: *A Reality Tour*	**Sterling Campbell**
Arcangels: *Living In A Dream*	**Chris Layton**
Randy Waldman: *Timing Is Everything* (reissue)	**Vinnie Colaiuta**
Jason Boesel: *Hustler's Son*	**Jason Boesel**
Chevelle: *Sci-Fi Crimes*	**Sam Loeffler**
Ghost Of Gloria: *Voices From The Red Room*	**Mark Poiesz**
Leni Stern: *Spirit In The Water*	**Harvey Wirht**, **Tim Keiper**
Big Big Train: *The Underfall Yard*	**Nick D'Virgilio**
Puddle Of Mudd: *Volume 4: Songs In The Key Of Love & Hate*	**Ryan Yerdon**

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ON TOUR

Marc LaFrance with Bachman & Turner
Joey Waronker with Norah Jones
Chris Vatalaro with Imogen Heap
Ed Lay with the Editors
Matthew Burr with Grace Potter & the Nocturnals
Sean Kinney with Alice In Chains
Alex Thomas with Air
Tico Torres with Bon Jovi
Trevor Stafford with Adelitas Way
Devon Clifford with You Say Party! We Say Die!
Aaron Gillespie with the Almost

GIMME 10!

PRACTICAL ADVICE FROM
PROS WHO KNOW

BOBBY SANABRIA

One of the most world-traveled, well-spoken, and high-profile drummer/leaders on the planet tells us what's what, Sanabria style.

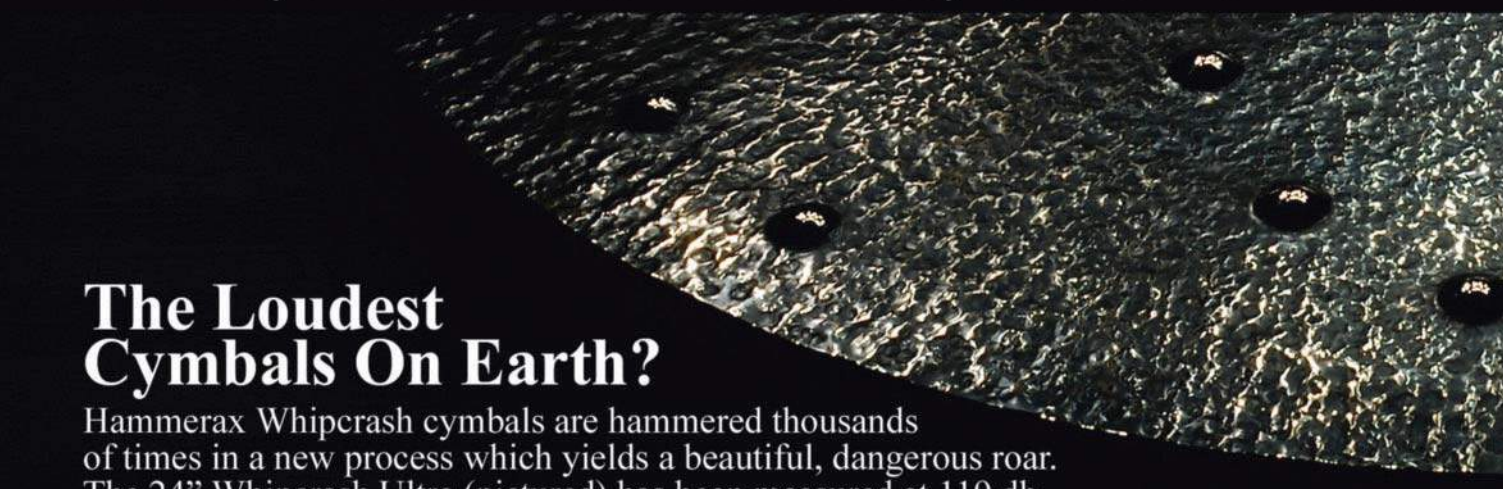
1 CHECK OUT CLINICS OTHER THAN JUST DRUM AND PERCUSSION EVENTS. The fact that so many demands are placed on a drummer/percussionist behooves you to take a look at how other instrumentalists approach things. You'll learn a lot by checking out how a saxophonist, bassist, keyboardist, trumpeter, trombonist, guitarist, violinist, etc., thinks. And don't forget clinics by orchestral percussionists, arrangers, composers, and songwriters as well.

2 DON'T PUT DOWN A MUSICAL STYLE THAT YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT. People who say a certain style of music sucks are really telling you they know nothing about that particular style. Simply stated, they're ignorant. All styles of music have something to say and have technical idiosyncrasies and an inherent vocabulary and syntax that require study. Let's face it: All of us have musical preferences. We all have different preferences for food as well. But it shouldn't make you a snob. Just think about it—the style of music you may love above all others wasn't born in a vacuum. You'll find that it draws upon various elements from other styles. So get off your high horse and keep an open mind. When in doubt, shut your mouth.

3 STRIVE TO BECOME A BETTER MUSICIAN. Ever wonder why there are so many drummer jokes? Question: How many people in the band? Answer: Four—three musicians and a drummer. It's a classic, and you don't have to be a musician to understand it. Drummers get a bad rap. But we're at the vortex of everything. Want to make a mediocre band better? Get a good drummer. So it would be logical to assume that the drummer should be the most knowledgeable musician in any group. Strive to be a good musician, not just a good drummer. You'll learn how to play what's appropriate a lot quicker. And you have some great role models.

Max Roach got his degree in composition from the Manhattan School Of Music. Tito Puente studied at Juilliard and was not only a great timbalero but a terrific drummer, vibes and marimba player, percussionist, composer, and arranger. Louie Bellson was a great composer and arranger. Phil Collins is a great songwriter. Dave Grohl is a versatile musician who

How many times has this WHIPCRASH® cymbal been hammered?



The Loudest Cymbals On Earth?

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plays guitar, bass, keyboards, and drums. Dave Garibaldi is a great teacher, and his writings on funk can be compared to scientific treatises. Yours truly is a proud graduate of the Berklee College Of Music and has arranged and composed for everything from small group all the way to big band. Don't believe me? Check out my two Grammy-nominated big-band CDs, *Live & In Clave!!!* and *Big Band Urban Folktales*.

The point is that being a better musician makes you a better drummer, and who doesn't want to be better? So always try to become a better musician, and maybe next time you'll be the one telling the guitarist what chords he should be playing on that tune you're rehearsing.

4 BE AS VERSATILE AS POSSIBLE. We live in exciting times, and the demands placed on drummers today are far more expansive than ever. The world has become a smaller place, and the drummer is at the center of that world. Whether you like it or not, you should strive to be as versatile as you possibly can be in this brave new world. I've had great success in my career because of my versatility as a player. Learn as much as you can about as many styles as possible, which obviously includes listening to as much varied music as possible. With today's Internet access, it's easy to do this. You'll find out one surprising thing: Varied styles have more things in common than differences.

5 AVOID NEGATIVE ENERGY AS MUCH AS YOU CAN. This is harder to do than you may think. The very nature of the music industry attracts a heightened sense of the absurd in terms of certain types of people. Avoid negative people, places, things, and habits. If you're hanging out with a bunch of musicians who are always downing other players, styles, etc., get out of Dodge. They're wasting your time and sapping the life out of you because they have nothing to teach you except that they're in a bad place. Always be positive, especially if you can't avoid one of these situations. Who knows, your positive energy might enlighten one of those people that Jaco Pastorius, the legendary electric bassist, used to call groove killers.

6 ALL DRUMMERS SHOULD PLAY SOME PERCUSSION, AND ALL PERCUSSIONISTS SHOULD PLAY SOME DRUMS. This goes back to my advice on being versatile. In the culture I come from, we have an ethos of one player being versed on a multitude of percussion. Think it's hard? It is. But remember, the drumset is the ultimate percussion instrument in that you utilize all of your limbs to play it. So you have an advantage. As a drummer, learning various percussion instruments will make you a better player. It'll change your approach to the instrument in that you'll be drawing on more sources of inspiration, and you'll be a more valuable commodity. And I'm not just talking about learning hand drums. I'm talking about learning orchestral percussion as well. The same holds true if you're a percussionist and you start learning drums. Your coordinated independence will improve, you'll think in different musical terms, and, again, you'll become a more valuable musical commodity.

7 LEARN AND RESPECT HISTORY. As I stated before, nothing is born in a vacuum. History is the best teacher. If you think that all of sudden you've invented something completely new on drums and/or percussion, you're in for a big surprise. In one way or another, it's been done before, or it's rooted in something that was done before. Every style of music has a history and a lineage of players who have contributed to that history. If you study that history, you'll learn a lot more about the style and be able to play it with more musical authenticity and, most of all, more respect.

8 BE THE PERPETUAL STUDENT, GET YOURSELF A GOOD TEACHER, AND *BE* A GOOD TEACHER. Curiosity may have killed the cat, but it never killed a musician. Always be inquisitive. It's a terrific teacher. The great Ed Shaughnessy once said in the pages of this magazine, and I'm paraphrasing here, that finding a good teacher (or teachers) will get you there faster than if you just try to do it on your own. 'Nuff said.

Be a good teacher—pass it on. You may be asking yourself, *Who, me?* But every time you share a musical thought with a fellow musician, you have the potential of being a good teacher. It could be as simple as noticing something a fellow drummer is doing wrong and saying, "Hey, you were doing something there with your foot. If you try this, I think you'll see you can do it in an easier way." So remember, you have the potential and the responsibility to pay it forward in our noble profession.

9 LEARN HOW TO DANCE. Before you start saying, "This guy's been watching too many episodes of *Dancing With The Stars*," think about it. What do Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, Lionel Hampton, Tito Puente, and Steve Gadd all have in common? All of them were/are great dancers. And that's just the short list. There have been some great dancers who could really play drums. Sammy Davis Jr. and Fred Astaire come to mind. Dancing used to be a great part of our mainstream culture. But there's hope, you! Want to learn something about counting off the right tempo, groovin', cookin' with gas, and droppin' it in the slot? If you can stand up, you can dance. Maybe some of you can break-dance. That's great, but it's a solo dance. I'm talking about dancing in couples. Someone has to lead, someone has to follow. Hmm, sounds a little like being a musician. So get on the good foot, pilgrim—you'll be glad you did.

10 MAKE SURE YOU SAY THANK YOU. Courtesy and graciousness are a dying form of human expression. I always tell my students to make sure they thank anyone who has contacted them for a gig, given them a particular tip, or showed them something that enhanced their playing or opened a door of opportunity for them. Those two words go a long way in acknowledging that you're grateful for someone helping you in your journey. And that especially goes for meeting a musical elder who has given us wisdom. As they say, to wisdom, the prize. So thanks, *Modern Drummer*, for asking me to do this, and thank *you* for taking the time to read my thoughts.

WHAT ARE KENT DRUMS?

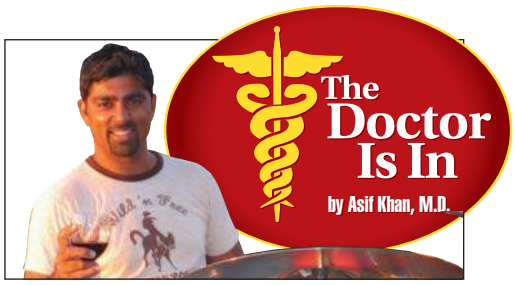
I recently played a gig in which the club had a set of old Kent drums. The shells felt very lightweight, like some budget-level vintage drums I've played, but their tone was really nice, especially the bass drum's. Can you tell me a bit about Kent drums and where they fit within the vintage drum world?
John

According to drum historian Harry Cangany, "Kent was a little company in Kenmore, New York, that closed in 1977. Its owner, Ed Kent, died in 2008. The exact history of Kent drums is unclear. The company may have started before World War II, but it can only be traced to after the war. Kent's real growth was during the '60s, when it produced thin maple-shell drums, which resembled those made by Gretsch. It is speculated that Kent got Gretsch's seconds or that someone, perhaps a former employee, had learned the Gretsch method for building shells. Kent claimed to have built 1,000 drumsets and 700 marching drums per month in its prime. These instruments tend to show up around the East Coast more than in other parts of the country.

"Kent drums were a low-cost American alternative to Ludwig, Slingerland, and other big-name manufacturers. The hoops, legs, strainers, and holders were usually poorly made and were plated import items.

"Many drummers got their start on Kent drums, so the company holds a nostalgic place in drum history. The drums sound good; they just didn't hold up well. By the '70s, Kent drums were being made in Japan. In the company's heyday, the drums featured round badges made of foil instead of metal. And they were made in the typical finishes of the time: red, blue, silver, gold, and green sparkle, as well as white marine and black diamond. I have seen Capri pearl as well. [The photos here are of a 1967 kit in red oyster finish.] Don't be surprised if you find twelve-lug Kent bass drums and six-lug snares. For many, these drums were a low-cost way to get a 'Gretsch-ish' sound.

"Vintage drum dealer Mark Cooper, of Cooper's Vintage Drums, specializes in Kent drums. His Web site, coopersvintagedrums.com, includes a detailed history as well."



HEEL PAIN

I developed plantar fasciitis [heel pain] after a long session. Is this common for drummers, and how long should I expect the pain to last?
Richard DeGraffenreid

Inflammation of the plantar fascia, or plantar fasciitis (PF), is responsible for about a million patient visits to the doctor per year in the U.S. It peaks in people between forty and sixty years of age. The fascia is a thick tissue attached to the skin of the foot, and it provides support as you walk.

So why did you get PF? There are a host of potential causes, including obesity, prolonged standing or jumping, flat feet, and/or having heel spurs. There's a high incidence of PF in runners and ballet dancers, caused by repetitive microtrauma. I focus on these groups because what we do as drummers is basically dance—or run—on unyielding surfaces (i.e., drum pedals) for hours and hours. So to answer your question, yes, PF is common in drummers, especially if one or more of the following risk factors applies to you: excessive or intense drumming, wearing faulty shoes or playing without shoes, using highly tensioned drum pedals, or having flat feet or pes cavus (high-arched) feet. All of these factors can result in increased tension on the fascia.

If you're sure you have PF, start out conservatively by altering your shoes—wear comfortable athletic shoes whenever possible—or your playing habits, and begin exercising. And I'm a big believer in rest and ice. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are often used for a few weeks as well. There are conflicting reports on the benefits of wearing padded foot splints at night to keep the ankle in the neutral position. Other remedies include wearing prefabricated silicone (not rubber) heel inserts combined with doing stretching exercises. You should also avoid wearing slippers or going barefoot if you're not used to it. Instead, wear arch-supporting shoes, and start a regular non-weight-bearing exercise routine.

If these methods fail to bring about improvement within two to three weeks, a corticosteroid/local anesthetic mixture may be the next step. There are other, more expensive treatments that you can discuss with your doctor, including radiation therapy, shockwave therapy, surgery, and even Botox injections. In your case, I would presume that with a strict routine that includes a break from drumming, adequate rest, icing, and medications—and perhaps one corticosteroid injection if your pain is severe enough—you should be back to playing within a month and pain free in four to six months.

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GRETSCH

RENOWN PUREWOOD OAK DRUMSET

by Anthony Riscica

The Renown Purewood series, released in 2005, originally consisted of two limited preconfigured sets, in cherry or walnut. Since then, Gretsch has added at least one new kit in a different shell type every year. For 2009 it was the Purewood Oak, a six-piece set in natural gloss finish that's designed to deliver all that oak has to offer, both visually and sonically.

Like most oak drums I've played, this kit put out a great deal of volume, due in part to the wood's dense grain. Gretsch also outfits the snare and toms with die-cast hoops to add power and focus to the sound. Combine that with the company's classic 30º bearing edges, and you have a great-sounding kit with a nice balance of tone and volume.

STARTING FROM THE BOTTOM

The 18x22 Purewood Oak kick had the low end and punch you'd expect from a drum this size, and then some. Seated behind the drum, I could feel its power and projection. When I stood in front of the kit with another drummer playing, I found the kick released a great deal of sub-bass frequencies, which added body to the sound. Sometimes drums made from dense woods don't offer some of the extreme low frequencies, mainly because the shell doesn't vibrate as much as one made of a less dense wood, like maple. That wasn't the case with this oak bass drum, though. It captured the essence of oak, with increased attack and clarity, while also possessing a warmer tonal dimension. I left the drum unmuffled; the dampening on the supplied Evans EMAD batter head was all I needed to achieve my ideal sound.

Gretsch outfits this kick with die-cast lugs and recessed hoop claws. The hefty claws have the ever-important rubber insert on the contact side to ensure a firm hold and a snug fit. The hoops match the rest of the set, with a beautiful grain pattern and distinctive lacquer finish.

IDEAL OAK SNARE

The matching $6^{1}/_{2}$x14 snare didn't sound like other oak drums, due in large part to its 30º bearing edge. Less of an angle on the edge means more contact between head and shell, which keeps the head from vibrating as much as it would with a sharp 45º edge. This offsets oak's inherent loud and stiff quality by letting the shell resonate more. The Purewood Oak snare had a big, open sound that retained its character across the tuning spectrum. I loved how the drum sounded at a medium-high tension, where it cut through but didn't hurt my ears. At a lower tension, it gave off a round "thud" that I often like to use in studio situations.

RACK AND FLOOR TOMS

The 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms on the Purewood Oak kit had a distinct, clear, and pure tone. Even when the drums were tuned up high, the overtones never got in the way of the punch. Again, I felt as though the rounded bearing edge played a role in this. When I hit the drums, it seemed the shell was being forced to resonate, giving off more of its true sound. But the toms, especially the 8x10, had a limit to the amount of tension that could be applied before they started to choke. The crisp, clean tone of these toms, however, would make them a hit both live and in the studio. The rack toms come with Gretsch's suspension-mount system, and the tom arms attach to cymbal stands. The mounting system was standard but sturdy.

The floor toms performed much like the rest of the kit. The 14x14 had the narrowest range of tuning. But it made a perfect bridge from the 9x12 to the 16x16, mainly because its tonal quality seemed to sit somewhere between the sound of a standard rack tom and a floor tom. The legs and mounts on the floor toms were thick and solid; the drums didn't move, no matter how much I laid into them. The legs come with beefy memory locks that link into the mount on the drum, adding to the floor toms' stability.

BEEFY BIG TOM

The 16x16 Purewood Oak floor tom was a monster. I could play this drum for hours. My ideal tuning was on the low end, where the drum still retained some tone but gave off a thick attack that resembled a kick drum's. Even at this low tuning, the tom projected and cut. The rounded bearing edge seemed to make the shell vibrate more. And on this larger shell, you could really *feel* the resonance.

CONCLUSION

Believe it or not, this Purewood kit marks the first time Gretsch has made a drumset out of oak. I tend to like a warmer sound than oak usually offers, but this set made me rethink that opinion altogether. While these drums are loud, their 6-ply shells, 30º bearing edges, and die-cast hoops add up to offer a distinctively warmer-than-expected oak sound with a nice, clean tone. I feel I finally know the true sound of oak. List price: $3,845.

gretschdrums.com

ISTANBUL AGOP

EPOCH, OM, WARONKER, AND CHAMBERLAIN CYMBALS

by Michael Dawson

If it's true that your reputation is only as good as the company you keep, then Istanbul Agop's selective roster of endorsing artists says a lot about how this Turkish cymbal company wants to be perceived. Top jazz/fusion drummers Lenny White and Cindy Blackman and first-call studio aces Joey Waronker and Matt Chamberlain not only endorse Istanbul Agop's handcrafted instruments, they also collaborated with the company to create their own signature models.

White and Blackman helped design complete cymbal series (Epoch and Om, respectively), while Waronker and Chamberlain focused on creating ride cymbals to satisfy their discerning tastes. Each of these new models offers something unique and individualized, while retaining the overall rich, warm, and musical qualities that Istanbul Agop has come to be known for.

LENNY WHITE'S EPOCH SERIES

Lenny White's Epoch line was developed a few years ago when the Return To Forever drummer approached Istanbul Agop to re-create the famous ride that jazz legend Tony Williams used on the classic Miles Davis album *Nefertiti*. The resulting 22" Epoch ride cymbal (which we reviewed in the July 2008 issue) proved so successful at capturing Williams' raspy tip-and-shank signature that White and Istanbul decided to expand the line with four crashes (17", 18", 19", and 20") and 14" hi-hats.

All of the Epoch crashes share the ride cymbal's extensive hand hammering, cursory lathing, and fairly flat profile. But unlike the ride, which has a small lathed bell, the crashes' bells are large and unlathed. The 19" and 20" models have wide, flat bells, and the 17" and 18" versions' bells jut up to a round crown.

The medium-weight 17" ($469) and 18" ($519) Epoch crashes had a chunky, explosive attack and a quick, dark, and slightly trashy decay. The 19" ($589) and 20" ($659) models sat more in the multipurpose crash/ride category. As rides, they possessed dry stick sounds with a controlled and tempered wash. As crashes, they required more than a delicate shoulder accent to get them to open up. The 20" had an especially rigid feel that reminded me of Germanic symphonic cymbals. These crashes, along with the rest of the Epoch series, seemed to have a certain "I dare you" attitude that could turn off drummers looking for instruments that "play themselves." But when you really dig in and hit these plates with confidence, there's a lot of color and complexity to be explored.

The 14" Epoch hi-hats ($679) are fairly thick, making them a little tough to control with the stick but great for busy left-foot interjections. Their dry, throaty splash sound was perfect for DeJohnette-style foot crashes. When played with sticks, the hats had a fairly high-pitched timbre and a lot of metallic overtones. These aren't the ideal hi-hats for super-subtle dynamic shifts. But for modern jazz applications where you're not afraid to really work your cymbals, White's Epochs have a lot to offer.

CINDY BLACKMAN'S OM SERIES

Jazz/rock drummer Cindy Blackman's signature Om series cymbals include a medium-thin 22" ride ($779); paper-thin 16" ($409), 18" ($519), and 20" ($659) crashes; and thin 15" hi-hats ($739). All of the cymbals feature prominent hand-hammering marks and have a dark matte finish. I've heard of drummers getting a similar appearance by scrubbing shoe polish onto the surface of their cymbals. But in this case the finish is baked on, so it won't come off over time.

OM SERIES HI-HATS

The 15" Om hi-hats were my personal favorites of all the cymbals in this review. I'm a big fan of the buttery, soft sound of well-worn vintage hi-hats, or even well-matched 16" crash cymbals. These Oms had those qualities, plus increased presence, a gritty sizzle when played partially open, and a plush but crisp foot "chick." They were also very quick to respond to all types of strokes, from soft tip hits on the bow to quick open "barks" to full-on shoulder shanks. Fans of Brian Blade's breathy hi-hat sound will love these.

After having my confidence challenged—in a good way—by the Epoch cymbals, it was a welcome change to sit back and enjoy the open, even, dark, and rich tones of the Oms. These cymbals were effortless to play, and they all worked well together. I usually prefer to mix and match series and models from different manufacturers to have a wide palette of sounds to work with. But the Om series felt great as a complete unit, whether played in a straight-ahead jazz context or as part of a vintage-style classic-rock setup. I really enjoyed how these cymbals could build to a roar without sounding harsh or indistinct. Even when struck firmly, they sounded mature and "worn in," with softer highs and more mid and low frequencies than I expected from cymbals fresh out of the kiln.

The 22" Om ride had a low but focused pitch and clear articulation that was supported—but never overwhelmed—by a warm, humming sustain. The bell sound was deep and focused, even when I shanked the bell with the shoulder of the stick. Crash accents elicited a slightly trashy sound, but the overtones remained balanced. This highly musical ride could easily become a workhorse for jazzers and rockers alike.

The 16", 18", and 20" Om crashes were perfect complements to the ride. The 16" had a gritty but shimmering crash sound, while the 18" had a more aggressive edge. The 20" crash worked well as a washy secondary ride and as a big, emphatic crash.

MATT CHAMBERLAIN AND JOEY WARONKER'S RIDES

Matt Chamberlain and Joey Waronker are among a rare breed of session drummers who are hired to bring their own special sounds to the studio. Chamberlain is best known for his slinky, loose feel and funky but organic drum and cymbal tones. Waronker's approach is a little more sparse and straightforward but equally creative. These drummers' personal tastes are very apparent in their signature ride cymbals.

Chamberlain's 23" ride ($789) is very thin and has a flat bell and an umbrella-like profile. As a result, it had a wide, low-pitched, and complex sound that opened up very easily. Playing this cymbal on the bow elicited a sparkling attack with a significant amount of trashy, low-pitched sustain. It's a similar sound to what you get from very old vintage rides, only with a more balanced overall voice. The bell sound got a bit blurred by the buildup of wash, so you won't want to use this cymbal for Neil Peart–style ride figures. But the crash sound was big, fast, and full of dark, opulent colors. It's a funky but musical cymbal, designed by one of the funkiest and most musical drummers around.

Waronker's giant 24" ride ($899) is medium-heavy and has a relatively flat profile with a large, round bell. If the Chamberlain ride is like a modernized vintage Zildjian, this one is more like an aged Paiste 2002 with a three-packs-a-day smoking habit. Its thick but warm stick "ping" had a certain skating quality that led me to play a lot of light 16th-note grooves. The bell sound was very clear but not clangy, and the wash was simultaneously complex and even. This cymbal sounded best when played with a delicate touch, but its strong and firm physique allowed for a lot of headroom in more high-velocity situations.

CONCLUSION

All of these new offerings from Istanbul Agop are as distinct as the musicians who helped design them. While it took me a few days of sparring with the new Epoch crashes and hi-hats to feel like we'd worked through our issues (mainly involving *my* lack of confidence and control), the Om series and the Chamberlain and Waronker signature rides were much more welcoming right from the start. Either way, all of them inspired me to up my game and play to the best of my abilities. Who can argue against that?

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JOYFUL NOISE DRUM COMPANY

TKO SEAMLESS BRASS AND LEGACY FLAMED BIRCH SNARES

by Michael Dawson

Colorado-based Joyful Noise Drum Company's mission is to "produce the finest musical instruments possible." In an effort to achieve that goal, the boutique manufacturer focuses its efforts on building—with stunning precision—seamless spun metal and steam-bent single-ply wood snares modeled after the cherished designs of classic American drums from the early twentieth century, but with a distinct modern twist. We were sent two Joyful Noise snares to review, a $6^1/_2$x14 brass TKO and a $6^1/_2$x14 Legacy Birch. Both proved exemplary in both construction and performance.

MODERN CLASSIC: TKO SEAMLESS BRASS

One of the most distinctive drums in Joyful Noise's Modern Classic series of metal snares is the Tim Kae Original (TKO) signature, which was originally designed for company dealer Tim Kae of Drum City Guitarland in Wheat Ridge, Colorado. This heavy $6^1/_2$x14 snare features a seamless brass shell with a unique "tailpipe" patina finish that's sealed with carnauba wax. The drum also comes with 2.5 mm solid brass nickel-plated triple-flange hoops, solid brass nickel-plated Corder tube lugs, Remo Ambassador drumheads, PureSound 20-strand wires, and Joyful Noise's sleek and sophisticated One Touch Classic snare strainer, which allows the snares to be disengaged with a flick of the finger and the snare wires to be swapped out quickly and easily by simply lifting the wire cords out of slots on the bottom of the strainer.

When solidifying his final design for this and the other Modern Classic snares, Joyful Noise president Curt Waltrip spent a lot of time studying the construction of his favorite vintage brass drums in order to create what he feels are "the most vibrant drums you will ever play." Waltrip's TKO snares incorporate '20s-style "bell flanged" bearing edges and crimped snare beds, for a wide tuning range and extra sensitivity, plus the one-piece shell design used on Black Beauty snares from the late '70s, which increases volume and tone. For a modern touch, Joyful Noise metal shells are heavier than their vintage archetypes, resulting in an instrument that produces more of a distinct musical pitch and more presence in all registers of the drum's voice.

In our testing, we found the TKO to be superpowerful and easy to tune, with an open, explosive sound. Medium tunings brought out a wide range of rich overtones, plus a lot of punchy attack and a slight pitch dip that worked great in the studio. Tuned up tight, the TKO had a pistol-like "pop" and bursting overtones that sounded a lot like what Chad Smith made famous on the classic Red Hot Chili Peppers album *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*. I personally preferred to ease off some of the long over-ring with a couple pieces of tape. But it was great to know that there was so much extra color there if I needed it. If you're feeling the itch to add a vintage brass snare to your collection, do yourself a favor and try one of these drums first. "Modern classic" indeed. List price: $1,280.

LEGACY FLAMED BIRCH

One of my favorite snare sounds of all time is the one session great Chris McHugh used on country superstar Keith Urban's hit single "Sweet Thing." I emailed McHugh to find out how he got such a singing, punchy tone, and he responded that he used a $6^1/_2$x14 Joyful Noise Legacy Flamed Birch tuned to a medium tension. This is ultimately what led me to contact Joyful Noise to try to get our hands on one of the drums for review. These extraordinary snares feature a solid steam-bent shell made of reclaimed birch that was submerged in the Great Lakes for over 150 years. As Waltrip explained via email, "There truly is something magical about this wood." We couldn't agree more. The first thing I did when I received the Flamed Birch snare was to try to replicate McHugh's "Sweet Thing" sound. All I did was tension the batter head a few turns above slack and loosen the snares a bit, and there it was: a gut-punch attack, a sloshy snare buzz, and a long sustain that sang for days.

The Legacy Flamed Birch isn't a one-trick pony, however. It has a very wide tuning range that goes from the looser "Sweet Thing" tension to a crisp, woody "crack" with just a couple twists of the tension rods. The upper tuning registers had more controlled overtones, but there was still an open, singing quality that you don't always get from drums tuned tight. And its projection rivaled that of a metal-shell snare.

Like the TKO, the Legacy Flamed Birch comes with solid brass nickel-plated Corder tube lugs, 2.5 mm solid brass nickel-plated triple-flange hoops, Remo heads, and the One Touch Classic strainer. The snare beds on all Joyful Noise wood drums are modeled after those used on '20s and '30s Ludwigs and Slingerlands. The shell is finished with hand-rubbed tung oil. All of these components add up to one incredible-sounding snare that's a perfect wood-shell counterpart to the lively smack of the brass TKO. List price: $1,350.

LEGACY IN THE MAKING

Like the coveted Black Beauty and Radio King snares of the early twentieth century, these impeccable instruments from Joyful Noise are destined to become classics that collectors and drummers will relish for decades to come. (Noted vintage drum collector Michael Curotto even added a Joyful Noise brass snare to his famous snare collection, alongside the classic pieces on which its design was based.) So if you're in the market for a high-end snare that has a vintage sound but with modern strength and reliability, you won't be disappointed with either one of these. Plus a portion of every Joyful Noise purchase is donated to help support local, national, and international charities.

joyfulnoisedrumcompany.com

FROM THOSE WHO KNOW

Joyful Noise's Modern Classic brass snares are based largely on the Black Beauty shell design used in the 1920s, so we reached out to vintage drum expert John Aldridge to get his take on how the new drums compare to those of years past. "These drums offer close to the same sound as '20s Black Beautys," he explains, "without the volume ceiling you have with older drums. They provide a vintage sound you can use in a modern setting." Todd Trent, owner of Drum Oasis in Ontario, California, and a longtime artist rep for Ludwig, shares similar thoughts. "They've done an amazing job of reproducing what was very roughly manufactured back in the day," he says. "Every Joyful Noise drum I've touched has a big tone and lots of dynamics and tracks really well."

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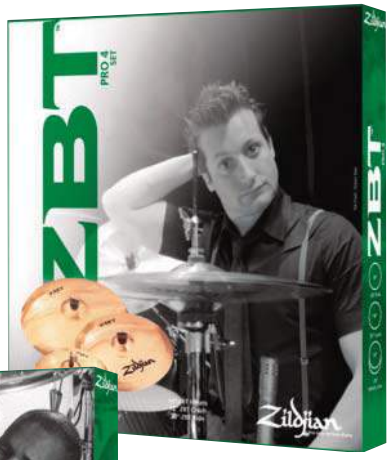

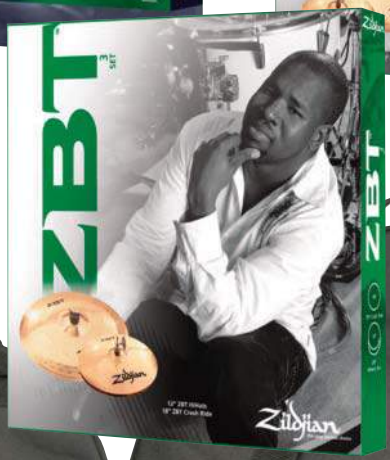

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(INK22GRPBIO)(INK22ALCHSKL)
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HARDWARE AND CYMBALS SOLD SEPARATELY

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INCLUDES FREE EXTRA 8" TOM!

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- Available separately or as a package
- Matching bongos sold separately

CONGA TRIO PACKAGE PRICE

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(LPP311-DWC, LPP312-DWC, LPP313-DWC) LIST: $1047.00

MATCHING BONGOS

$99.99 SAVE $74 OFF LIST

(LPP601-DWC) LIST: $174.00

AFFORDABLE, TOP-NOTCH CONGAS WITH YOUR CHOICE OF NATURAL OR SUNBURST FINISH

These affordable Aspire congas have a big, powerful, well-rounded sound with added warmth. To match its pure, distinctive sound, the LP Aspire Conga set is available in either a natural or sunburst finish.

- 28" Tall, natural rawhide tucked heads
- Crafted from kiln-dried, environmentally friendly Siam oak
- Chrome plated adjustable double stand
- Chrome comfort curve style hoops
- Available in natural or sunburst finishes
- Matching bongos sold separately

SUNBURST

CONGA PAIR WITH STAND

$299.99 SAVE $235 OFF LIST

(LPA646-AWC)(LPA646-SBC) LIST: $535.00

MATCHING BONGOS

$89.99 SAVE $55 OFF LIST

(LPA601-AWC)(LPA601-SBC) LIST: $145.00

Guitar Center Pearl® Guitar Center

REAL SIZES

Pearl created an electronic drum set that no longer feels like you're hitting a collection of practice pads. E-Pro Live features ultra realistic shells to give you a true electronic drum playing experience.

REAL HARDWARE

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REAL SHELLS

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The new Pearl E-Pro Live is a revolutionary electronic drumset that looks, feels and sounds like real drums. Never before have drummers been given the limitless sonic capabilities of electronic drums on a drum kit built with real shells, brass cymbals, and drum set hardware. Sized and configured exactly like acoustic drums for a natural and real feel. Pearl's Tru-Trac Electronic Heads not only feature dual zones, the smooth coating on the heads produces a feel virtually identical to acoustic drums. Made of 6-ply wood shells, E-Pro Live can easily morph into a great sounding acoustic by removing the top hoops and the Tru-Trac heads and replacing them with regular drumheads. But the E-Pro Live is more than just a great feeling kit, it's also a great sounding kit. With fully editable sounds ranging from vintage drum sets to digital beats to orchestral to world percussion sounds, the E-Pro Live has almost unlimited options.

- 10 x 6.5, 12 x 7 and 14 x 8 rack toms with a 20 x 12 bass and 14 x 4.5 snare with white heads
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- r.e.d.BOX module with 128MB of RAM, 1000 High Definition sounds and 100 High Definition kits
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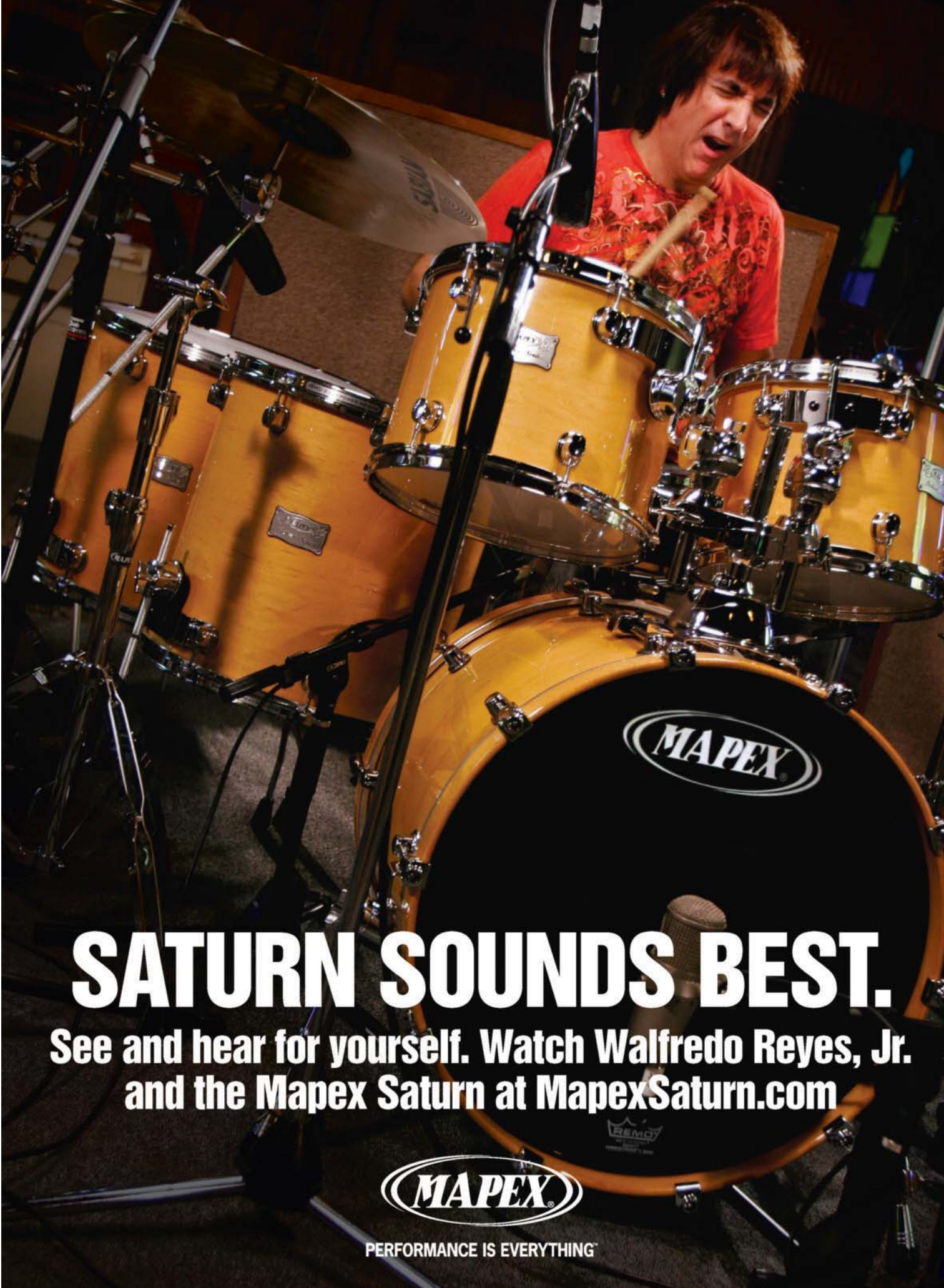
- Includes Pearl Icon rack

PEARL E-PRO LIVE-PRE ORDER

SEE STORES FOR PRICE

(EPLXLO5P/13) LIST: $5499.99



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MAPEX

PERFORMANCE IS EVERYTHING™

KORG
WAVEDRUM

by Michael Dawson

Originally released in 1994, the Korg Wavedrum was met with awe from electronics enthusiasts, mainly for its unparalleled dynamic response and seemingly endless sonic capabilities. Unfortunately, not many everyday drummers got a chance to play one. Only about 800 Wavedrums were produced, and their exceedingly high selling price (more than $2,000) kept many potential players at bay.

While the demand for the Wavedrum at the time of its release may have disappointed the folks at Korg, the lore and mystique behind this unusual instrument continued to grow as the world of electronic drumming saw a major boom in the past decade. Thankfully, Korg heard the rumbling and decided to produce a much more reasonably priced second-generation Wavedrum. With a street price of roughly $600 and worldwide distribution from most major dealers and online retailers, the updated and more affordable Wavedrum is now available for all curious e-drummers to check out.

HOW IT WORKS

It's probably best to begin a description of the Wavedrum by telling you what it *isn't*. The Wavedrum is not a MIDI controller. (In fact, no MIDI inputs or outputs are included at all.) It's not a sampler, it's not a drum machine, and it's not an electronic drum pad that you can use to play external sound modules. Instead, the Wavedrum is a self-contained musical instrument that combines digital signal processing (DSP) and pulse-code modulation (digital representations of analog signals) to create a world of sounds that are neither completely electronic nor acoustic but rather an amalgamation of the two.

Will Calhoun

THE WAVEDRUM DEVOTED

World-class drummers and percussionists like Tool's Danny Carey, Living Colour's Will Calhoun, and Whitney Houston's Bashiri Johnson have been exploring the Wavedrum's expressive capabilities for years. Carey places the Wavedrum within his tom setup when playing with Tool, to add synth and percussion textures to the band's dark and moody music, while Calhoun prefers to improvise compositions on the drum using various effects and loop pedals. Percussionist Johnson plays the Wavedrum like a conga, even though he prefers the instrument's "trippier" sounds.

When asked what makes the Wavedrum so special, Johnson explains it best. "When it first came out, there wasn't any other electronic drum that had the same dynamic response," he says. "There were only trigger-based instruments that played one static sound. So when you hit them lightly, the sound would be softer. And when you hit them harder, the sound would be louder. But there wasn't anything that you could put your hands on and perform with that would sound *different* as you changed the way you played it. The Wavedrum was the first instrument that could do that."

Bashiri Johnson

So, what does this mean for you as a player? Basically, the tones that you create by striking the Wavedrum's 10" Fiberskyn-like head or thick aluminum rim—whether you use your hands, fingernails, sticks, brushes, mallets, or any other implement—are combined with advanced digital processing and acoustic samples to produce in-the-moment electronic sounds based on your personal playing style.

To capture the acoustic sounds and articulations of what you play on the Wavedrum, piezo pickups are placed throughout the instrument. The signals from these small microphones are sent through digital processors, applying the dynamics of what you play to one of thirty-six electronic algorithms (synthesized percussion sounds). The same sensors also trigger the sampled (PCM) sound, tracking the velocity of your strokes along with where you hit the drum (rim, center, edge). It's the combination of these elements that gives the Wavedrum its surprisingly nuanced dynamic sensitivity.

For even more expressiveness, a pressure sensor is located beneath the center of the head. If you apply pressure to the head while playing the Wavedrum, you can control various parameters, such as pitch or decay. All of these functions are incorporated in an effort to create the most in-the-moment playing experience possible.

HOW IT'S PLAYED

The coolest thing about the Wavedrum is that there is no set way to play it. The drumhead isn't divided into specific trigger zones, and the rim doesn't have designated played surfaces. So the Wavedrum behaves much more like a real drum than any other electronic instrument does. The entire rim and drumhead (excluding the sensor cover and LCD screen) can be struck to produce different sonic shades and colors. There are even two scraping surfaces on the rim that can be played like a guiro.

The Wavedrum comes with a hundred presets, which include everything from basic drum and percussion sounds to pitched instruments like a Jew's harp and a broken kalimba to various synth and special effects. Some of the old Wavedrum sounds are included as well.

To get a good sense of what the Wavedrum does best, I recommend starting with the Tabla Drone preset (number 35). Not only does this program contain some great tabla sounds, it's also set up so you can play drones and bells by striking any part of the rim while riffing with the tabla samples that are triggered from the drumhead. The center sensor controls both sliding pitch bends and the scale note of the drone. What amazed me the most with this preset was how organic and real it felt. When I used traditional tabla techniques, it tracked every nuance of my strokes, including the sound of my fingertips rubbing against the head. When I used brushes, I could add swirls and trills to my tabla explorations. Sticks and mallets brought out stronger accents and snappier attacks.

Some of the other built-in percussion presets, like djembe, conga, and dumbek, provided a similarly authentic playing experience. These patches revealed how the Wavedrum responds to the various timbres and dynamics of traditional hand drum techniques such as palm mutes and slaps, in a way that made me feel like I was playing on the real thing. Some of the more abstract presets, like Cold Wind and Aliens In The Basement, were great for exploring random textural soundscapes, while the bass drum/snare splits were good for playing simple hip-hop/electronica–style beats.

UNLIMITED CREATIVE POTENTIAL

The Wavedrum is an intriguing instrument that requires more effort and creative vision than simply turning it on, choosing your sounds, and jamming out the same old beats and fills that you'd play on your acoustic kit. Yes, you can whack it with sticks and get some pretty cool results. But where it really shines is in capturing the subtleties of drumming that are usually absent from electronic drums. Brush swirls, buzz strokes, mallet rolls, the slightly thinner and brighter sound of playing near the edge…all of these gray-area timbres are present, providing a more true-life playing experience than ever before. Not to mention there's the ability to create a hundred of your own programs, by using—or combining—thirty-six different algorithms and a hundred head and a hundred rim PCM samples.

korg.com/wavedrum

WHAT'S YOUR SOUND?
Jack DeJohnette plays the Vault 3-Point Ride.
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VAULT
Delivering dark, smoky tone across three different playing points including a raw central ring, the Vault 3-Point Ride is the latest innovation from Jazz Great Jack DeJohnette and the SABIAN Vault Team.
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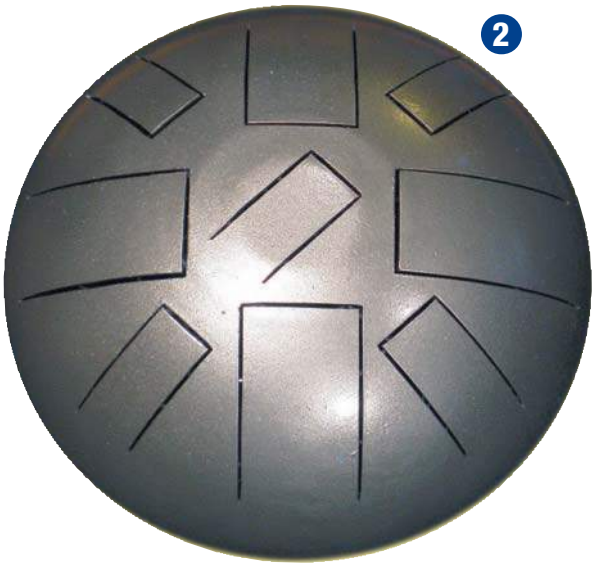
Hear more at sabian.com
SABIAN
BECAUSE SOUND MATTERS

Orion mapa burl setup

1

The 5x12 Phantom and the 6½x14 Machete are two of the fourteen new Black Panther snare drums from Mapex.



2

1. MAPEX has released a limited edition Orion component pack featuring mapa burl exterior veneers on 7-ply North American maple shells. The six-piece component pack includes an 18x22 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, and a matching 5½x14 snare. List price: $5,349.

Mapex's professional-level Black Panther snare drum series has been redesigned to include fourteen new models. Each drum has its own nickname and features one of two classic lugs (a shield-style split lug or a tube-style lug) and a new die-cast chrome-plated badge.
mapexdrums.com, blackpanthersnares.com

2. DRUMVIBE Vibe Drum melodic metal instruments are available in a variety of models. The Half Pint Vibe Drum ($359) is a compact version that's said to be great for drum circles, travel, or whenever a lighter-weight drum is wanted. The small, lightweight DrumVibe Single ($439) consists of nine notes and has an enclosed playing surface to increase the resonance and sonic range. The Double Vibe Drum ($469) provides the same resonance as the Single, with an additional scale on the reverse side. The Duo Vibe Drum ($759) offers a melodic tuned surface plus a hand-drum head.
drumvibe.com

3. U.K. drum maker GATTON's handcrafted Corian snares are claimed to perform like high-end wood drums at a mid-level price. These snares come with Trick GS007 strainers, S-Hoops, Remo heads, and PureSound snare wires and are available in 13" and 14" diameters and 5" to 7" depths. Prices start at £400 in the U.K. For more information, contact Craig Cockrell at 01522 790 900.

4. The DDRUM Carmine Appice 5x14 gold-finish snare drum features bullet lugs, a heavy-duty 6.5 mm brass shell, gold-plated hoops, a Nickelworks throw-off, and a custom-engraved Carmine Appice logo. List price: $599.99.
ddrum.com

5. The SUPERDRUM is a 12-lug snare drum designed to have improved sensitivity and articulation by increasing control over the tensioning of the top and bottom heads. Legendary drummer Bernard Purdie currently endorses the Superdrum and often uses one live and in the recording studio. The snare is available in 5½x14 and 6½x14 sizes, with brass, maple, or chrome shells. Twenty-strand wire snares are standard, and cable snares are optional for concert or symphonic players. Retail prices: $299 to $599.
superdrum12.com

4

3

5

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6

7

6. VIC FIRTH's three new designer stick bags are available in plaid, digital camo, and skull and crossbones patterns. Able to hold twenty-four pairs of sticks, these high-end bags also have pockets for accessories and sheet music and feature two detachable backpack-style shoulder straps and elastic fasteners with retractable clips for secure suspension from a floor tom. List price: $74.25.

New signature stick models include one for R&B drummer **Aaron Spears**, which is made of hickory and features a taper that blends smoothly into the neck and the tip. Punk legend **Marky Ramone**'s is medium-thick with a short taper and a barrel tip. Made of hickory, this stick is $16\frac{3}{8}$" long. The **Tommy Igoe** Groove Essentials stick features a "Taj Mahal" tip that's said to be ideal for sensitive cymbal work. Its extended taper and length add leverage for great feel and power when needed. **Cindy Blackman**'s model is designed with a 5A hickory shaft, an enlarged neck, and a full taper. A rounded arrow-shaped tip helps create a big sound on drums and a full, clear sound on cymbals. This stick is said to be ideal for many different styles of music. Rammstein drummer **Christoph Schneider**'s 2B-size signature stick is crafted in hickory and finished in white. It's a thick stick with a short taper, a teardrop tip, and a length of $16\frac{1}{4}$".

All of these new models list for $16.

The company's anti-slip drumstick coating, Vic Grip, is now available on four more top-selling American Classic sticks: Extreme 5A (X5A) and Extreme 5B (X5B), in both wood and nylon tip. List prices: $18 for wood-tip models, $18.50 for nylon-tip versions.
vicfirth.com

7. The new Inked By EVANS program allows drummers to print high-resolution color graphics on bass drum heads, with multiple options for customization. "Showcase" includes licensed designs by well-known musicians and graphic designers, including Alchemy Gothic, Lethal Threat, Al McWhite, and Woodstock artwork; "gallery" consists of interesting textures, nature scenes, abstract photography, and clever graphics; and the "custom" option allows users to upload their own graphics and text over one of the "gallery" designs.

Evans' new Power Center single-ply tom heads are said to offer full-bodied tone with strong attack, as well as increased durability and focus. These heads are designed for players who prefer a classic '70s tom sound but require modern consistency and quality. Retail prices range from $26 to $48.
inkedbyevans.com, evansdrumheads.com

INTRODUCING THE M-SERIES FROM MEINL CYMBALS

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MD Product **Shootout!** CAJONS

The simple translation of *cajon* from Spanish to English is "box." In nineteenth-century Peru, a cajon was a wooden crate that African slaves used to transport the fruit harvest. Because musical instruments weren't allowed in the slave community, these wood crates were often used to simulate drums. Over two hundred years later, the cajon has evolved into a viable instrument that all types of drummers and percussionists are incorporating into their setups.

From basic rectangular shapes with metal snare wires tacked to the inside to angled-front-plate boxes with separate playing surfaces, the modern cajon and its many variations allow drummers to participate during quieter gigs that would normally be off limits. With a cajon in hand, you have kick, snare, and many more drumkit-like sounds all in one compact package. Let's take a look at more than a dozen of these musical boxes.

by Fran Azzarto

MEINL The Widest Variety

With more than thirty models, Meinl offers a plethora of cajons to choose from. The ones we played included the **Makah Burl String Cajon**, the **Ergo-Shape Pedal Cajon**, the **Bass Pedal Cajon**, the **American White Ash Pickup Cajon**, and the oversize **Trejon**. Some of these models, like the Makah Burl, come equipped with four metal strings stretched across the inside of the front plate, and others have a fan of metal wires mounted inside that can be adjusted to press against the playing surface.

The standouts in this group were the Makah Burl, the Bass Pedal, and the Trejon. The Makah Burl had the snappiest snare sound of all the cajons we tested, and it produced a decent amount of low end as well. With adjustable top corners and string tension, this model allows you to really tweak the sound to fit your playing style. The Bass Cajon is a couple of inches larger and is equipped with a foot pedal for quick on/off movements of the snare wires. The larger size and ebony front plate give the drum more resonant bass frequencies and a warmer snare effect.

Unique among all the models is the Trejon. First of all, its size and shape distinguish it from other cajons on the market. The top is 19" wide by $11\frac{1}{2}$" deep. The height is the standard 19", but the ebony front plate is mounted at an angle to allow for a more comfortable playing position. The Trejon has three playing surfaces. The largest is the bass section. The upper left corner produces a resonant tom-type effect, while the right-hand corner has internally mounted adjustable snare wires. The low end of the Trejon was comparable to that of the Bass Cajon, and the snare sound was tight, with little sympathetic buzz when the other surfaces were struck. All Meinl cajons come with a padded sitting surface, and cases are available.

Prices: $130–$320 • meinlpercussion.com

PEARL Jingle Sounds To Play With

Pearl cajon models range from the signature **Primero Box Cajon** to the odd-shaped **Elite Tube Cajons**. The most distinctive, however, is the **Jingle Cajon**. Pearl teamed up with percussionist Pete Korpela to design this hip and versatile beatbox, which is made of fiberglass and finished in the company's exclusive Carubinga exotic wood lacquer. The Jingle Cajon has internally mounted snare wires, plus two sets of Brazilian platinella-style jingles placed on the lower part of the front plate. A hand-adjustable wing nut holds the jingles in place, so the desired amount of rattle can be dialed in quickly and easily. Tighten the wing nuts, and the jingles are rendered silent. Not as warm sounding as some of the wood drums we tested, the Jingle Cajon had a fairly good amount of bass and a decent snare "snap." But the real fun kicks in when you start playing around with the jingles. Think about it—four different sounds out of one box? Very cool!

Prices: $129–$200
pearldrum.com

TYCOON Unique In Every Way

Tycoon offers upwards of twenty cajon models, including an acrylic version. The three they gave us to test out were the **E-Cajon** and two **Roundback Series Cajons**. The E-Cajon body is made of bubinga, and the front panel is makah burl. Located on the left side of this model is an amplified speaker with an MP3 input, an auxiliary input, and a volume control. On the back is an output jack that's attached to a pickup located at the top of the inside front panel. The high placement of the pickup didn't amplify foot muffling or pitch changes made by applying foot pressure to the front plate.

The Roundback Series Cajons come in two sizes, the standard $19\frac{1}{2}$" and the taller $20\frac{1}{2}$". Both are $11\frac{1}{2}$" deep. The Roundback North American Ash model had a big bass tone and a snappy snare response, much more than the smaller Black Makah Burl. All of the Tycoon cajons we tried have adjustable snare strings and front plates, as well as large rubber feet. **Prices: $100–$300**
tycoonpercussion.com

TOCA Tall And Handsome

Toca offers three cajon models: **Burl Oak**, **Bordeaux**, and **Wood**. What separates this company's versions from the others in this review is their size. All three are larger than average, with a $12^1/_2$x13 seat and a height of $20^1/_2$". Each drum is equipped with dual-adjustable fanned snares, rubber feet, and a padded seat. We tested the basic Wood model. Beautifully finished with a high gloss, this cajon had plenty of bass projection, with a warm snare sound and an easily adjustable front plate to allow for more or less high end. The low end was comparable to that of the Meinl Bass Cajon, but at a slightly lower pitch. The drum was big and loud, and the gloss finish proved to be easy on the hands during a long unplugged gig. **Prices: $170–$190 • tocapercussion.com**

GON BOPS
Hybrids For Hand Drummers

In addition to offering some of the most finely built and beautifully finished cajons on the market (like Alex Acuña's inlayed signature **Aztec** and the traditionally finished **Flamenco**), Gon Bops produces a variety of hybrid instruments that bridge the gap between the classic sounds of Afro-Cuban and African hand drums and traditional Peruvian cajons. The **Conga Cajons** come in quinto, conga, and tumba sizes. These drums sounded similar to tightly tuned congas, with a sharper and more focused overall tone. The quinto produced super-tight slaps, short and pitchy open tones, and a decent amount of bass response. The larger tumba had a boxier tone that was closer to that of a traditional cajon. These drums would be great for percussionists who seek cutting conga sounds but don't want to deal with temperamental animal-skin heads.

The **Djembe Cajon** is another hybrid instrument from Gon Bops that blends the woody thump of a cajon with the wide tonal range of an African djembe. Strong, sharp slaps were very easy to achieve on this drum, and the open tone projected more than that of the Conga Cajons. There wasn't as much deep bass as you'd get with a regular djembe, but this easy-to-play drum's cajon/djembe blend was very versatile. All Gon Bops cajons come with well-made zip-out cases.

Prices: $249–$359 • gonbops.com

SONOR Bamboo Snap

Another German drum company that has joined the cajon craze is Sonor, which has three models: **Cajon Plus**, **Mini Cajon**, and **Standard Cajon**. All of them are equipped with something we haven't seen in any other versions: Instead of using either fanned or strung snare wires, Sonor decided to attach a series of small bamboo sticks to the upper inside of the drum to achieve a snare effect.

The Cajon Plus, which is standard in size and has a big padded seating area, was the Cadillac of the three. Two knobs are located on the back to allow players to move an internally mounted hard felt piece to cover the rear resonance hole as much as desired. Changing the size of the opening affects the pitch of the bass tone while tightening or opening up the overall sound. When the hole was wide open, the low end had a lot of kick.

The Standard may not have a fancy seat or an adjustable resonance hole, but this cajon kicked out some serious low end, more so than most of the others we tested. The Mini Cajon is smaller than a standard cajon and would work well for younger drummers. All three models are made of birch and have adjustable front plates as well as felt-covered feet.

Prices: $120–$300 • sonor.com

LATIN PERCUSSION
Big, Warm Sound

LP has four cajon models. The three we examined were the **Angled Cajon**, the **Aspire**, and the **Mario Cortes**. The Angled Cajon is like the Meinl Trejon, with a tilted front plate and fanned snare wires, but it has only one playing surface. The bass and snare sounds were similar to what we heard from most of the other standard-size snare cajons, and the hefty rubber feet kept the drum from sliding around. The entry-level Aspire is a simple and short square cajon. This little guy put out a decent amount of low end and offered a bright "snap."

The real diamond from LP was the Mario Cortes model, which is standard in every way—except in sound. This handmade 19"-high, 12x12 birch box is equipped with four snare wires stretched from top to bottom across the front plate and is modestly finished with a light gloss lacquer. Its small rubber feet make it easy to tilt back, if needed. The low end of the Mario Cortes was not pitched as low as that of the big Tycoon Roundback, but it was the warmest of all the models we played. This is one great-sounding cajon.

Prices: $100–$220 • lpmusic.com

ZION One Of A Kind

One of the most visually striking drums we tried was **Zion's Acoustic/Electric Cajon**. All Zion cajons are handmade from maple and are constructed without the use of nails or fasteners. Each drum comes equipped with an electronic preamp/pickup system. This model looks more like a mini conga than a traditional box cajon. (Please don't sit on it!) The playing surface is a 12"-wide octagon mounted on a 23"-high tapered frame. When you play the Zion drum as if it's a conga, a warm bass tone and muted slap can be achieved. Put this puppy on its side, however, and things start to get really funky. The cajon has three sets of small wooden balls strung together on the inside top of one of the frame's eight sides, and when you strike that side with some force, a mellow snare sound is produced. This extra tone inspired me to explore a bunch of new sounds and rhythms.

The preamp/pickup on the Zion Acoustic/Electric Cajon is extremely sensitive. The best use for this is to run the signal through guitar pedal effects. Fun!

Price: $389 • ziondrums.com

MODERN DRUMMER DIGITALLY ENHANCED

AMERICAN IDOLS LIVE/USHER'S AARON SPEARS

Interview and photos by Sayre Berman

DRUMS: DW Collector's series in clear hard satin over birch with satin chrome hardware
A. 7x14 Edge snare
B. 16x18 floor tom
C. 7x12 tom
D. 14x16 floor tom
E. 18x24 bass drum
F. $6^{1}/_{2}$x14 copper snare (spare)

"I went with this setup for the *American Idol* 2009 tour because these sizes give me a big, strong, beefy sound that I need for a gig like this," Spears says. "The show has a tremendous amount of musical variety, from jazz to heavy rock. So I need a drum configuration that can deliver the bigger rock sounds."

CYMBALS: Zildjian
1. 16" K Light hi-hats
2. 20" Oriental Crash Of Doom
3. 18" K Custom Fast crash
4. 10" K Custom Dark splash
5. 16" A Custom EFX (stacked with 10" custom-made splash)
6. 22" K Dark Medium ride
7. 19" K Medium Thin crash
"I went big with the cymbals like I did with the drums, to make sure the rock sound is authentic and powerful."

HEADS: Remo Black X snare batters, clear Emperor tom batters, clear Ambassador on tom bottoms, clear Powersonic kick batter with DW hourglass pillow for muffling. "The Black X makes the tone on the snare just a little bit drier than a regular Emperor or Emperor X would. That sound is great for me because the snare doesn't need much muffling."

ELECTRONICS: Roland SPD-S pad

PERCUSSION: PureSound Speedball beater and Twisted snare wires, assorted **Toca** percussion

HARDWARE: DW 9900 double-tom stand, 9700 boom stands, 9000 bass drum pedal, 9100 throne, 9300 snare stand, 9500 hi-hat stand, Air Lift throne

ACCESSORIES: Yamaha Groove-Wedge (on snare rim), **Vic Firth** sticks. "Check out my gear and my setup and see what could work for you. Experiment with different things. Just make sure you enjoy yourself while you're trying to find your own sound and your own voice."

Interview by Dave Previ • Photos by Paul La Raia

TOWER OF POWER'S DAVID GARIBALDI

DRUMS: Yamaha Absolute Birch shells with custom David Garibaldi badge
A. 3 1/2x14 David Garibaldi Signature snare
B. 4x10 Custom Birch side snare
C. 7 1/2x10 tom
D. 9x13 tom
E. 14x16 tom
F. 16x22 bass drum

"I got these drums in 1993, around the release of my signature snare drum," Garibaldi says. "At the time I was playing a set of Beech Custom drums while touring with Mickey Hart's band. When I returned to Tower Of Power in 1998 I tried using the beech drums, but they didn't have the fatness I liked to hear when playing with a band of this size. So I opted for the birch set because it had that super-focused sound I like. These drums sounded sweet when I got them, but then they sat in my garage, which is warm in the summer, and they kind of baked, matured, and dried out. When I pulled them out and played them, the sound was phenomenal. I was like, 'These are *it*.'

"My tom configuration is unconventional; the drum sizes are 3" apart, so you get a nice spread from high to low. I love 10" and 16" toms, but neither a 14" nor a 12" gave me the beef I was looking for. They were a little too…'vegetarian.' With the 13" I didn't have to detune the drum; it just fit perfectly."

CYMBALS: Sabian
1. 13" Jam Master David Garibaldi Signature hi-hats
2. 16" HHX X-Treme crash
3. 19" HHX X-Treme crash
4. 14" Hand Hammered Thin crash
5. 20" Jam Master ride (custom size)
6. 17" HHX X-Treme crash
7. 12" Custom HHX hi-hats with flat top

"I've really fallen in love with Sabian's X-Treme crashes. They way they fit sonically into the music is just ideal. I was using all odd-size crashes—the way they speak is more appealing to me than some of the even sizes I had. I played a 15" for the longest time until it broke, then I just started using the 16" because it was what I had. I like my setup tight, so I use a 20" Jam Master ride as opposed to the 22". The 22" sounds just as good, if not better, but the 20" fits a little more compactly within the rest of my setup."

HEADS: Remo coated Ambassador on tops, Diplomats on bottoms

PERCUSSION: LP ES-11 Salsa Claro mountable cowbell on LP328 Sliding Bass Drum Percussion Mount

STICKS: Vic Firth David Garibaldi Signature model

MODERN DRUMMER DIGITALLY ENHANCED

ERIC FISCHER

by Michael Parillo

With a pair of lovingly detailed video clips, a modern-day Buddy Rich devotee finds himself **playing the master's solos with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra—in the 1940s.**

The image of a fiery, hot-blooded Buddy Rich, whipping his sticks around the kit as smile smudges into sneer and spreads back into a wicked grin, is one of the most indelible in the world of drumming. Rich, like no other, dug in with a verve and a passion that simply made us want to *play*. Of the countless thousands of drummers who've been delighted and inspired by Buddy's effortless skills, Eric Fischer, who plays in the Michigan rock bands Radar Pilot and Space Nelson, has gone to some great lengths to give his thanks, and he's come up with two educational and entertaining tributes to the drum wonder.

Using video of Rich's solos on the tunes "Not So Quiet Please" (1948) and "The Trombone Man Is The Best Man In The Band" (1941, from the film *Las Vegas Nights*), both with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, Fischer transcribed the drum parts, overlaid MIDI sequences of his transcriptions against the footage to check his work, and then filmed himself playing the solos. Finally he put it all together in fascinating sequences that include split-screen match-ups between the two drummers. It's done with great care and attention to detail, along with a befitting sense of humor. (Just wait till you hear MIDI Buddy!) But before we spoil the surprise any further, we suggest you head over to our Web site to see the clips and transcriptions for yourself. As for the trombone man being the best in the band, well, Rich and his solos have a little something to say about *that*….

MD: I imagine Buddy Rich is one of your favorite drummers.
Eric: Yeah, for sure. His musicality and technique are astonishing. Here's this guy who never had a lesson and started out in vaudeville, went through the history of jazz, and even ended up playing some rock stuff with his big band. He ran the gamut; he did it all.
MD: Making videos and using MIDI weren't on your agenda initially, right?
Eric: I transcribed the "Not So Quiet Please" solo first, and I thought maybe *Modern Drummer* would like to publish it. *MD* had never received anything from me, and I thought, *How can I verify the accuracy?* So I did the MIDI thing. I didn't think people would dig the whole thing that much, but the biggest reaction I got was when people saw the duet portion with Buddy and me.
MD: When writing out an open solo, how do you deal with the blurrier, hard-to-transcribe sections? The music has bars of seven and five….
Eric: I was basically going by Buddy's phrasing. It kind of broke itself up into those sections. I could feel where a passage had completed, so I had to reassign a new time signature at that point. It felt natural to me where those sections occurred.
MD: How did you get your video backdrops together?
Eric: I just looked online for information and made a green screen in my basement, basically with some green cloth; it was a real simple method. I had to work out some lighting issues. I erased Buddy Rich from a still of his video and dropped myself in. It took a lot of time and effort. I had never done anything like that before, so the learning curve was steep. [laughs]
MD: When we see you and Rich in the split-screen image, we're hearing both of you, right?
Eric: Correct.
MD: Have you had any concern about being compared with Buddy Rich?
Eric: Yeah, for sure. I know the solos were just off the top of his head. It took me, with the transcribing and everything, a good year to learn "Quiet." And I know I'm nowhere near that and never will be, but it was definitely a learning experience and a fun thing to try to accomplish. I was really inspired by the solo and how musical it was.
MD: What did you learn from delving so deeply into Rich's world?
Eric: Just how clean his technique is. To try to get to that level and maintain it for a minute and a half—it was pretty tough. [laughs] Interestingly enough, I found the only way I could get that speed and clean phrasing was to use the same type of sticks he had, the Buddy Rich reissue sticks from Capella. I don't know if they're made anymore. That was really the only way I could push it over the edge. It's splitting hairs, but with something as simple as using a heavier stick, I noticed I couldn't sustain it.
MD: Did you do anything else gear-wise to get closer to authenticity?
Eric: On "Quiet," the main floor tom has a calfskin head to try to emulate that sound and feel. And the rest of the toms have Fiberskyns to capture the vibe. The kit I used is a maple Ludwig Super Classic from 2001. I found the rack tom on eBay. It's a WFL, and it had the smaller lugs. I was trying to match up with the era.

"Trombone Man" is the same drumkit, but I used an overlay—a jpeg, basically—of Buddy's Slingerland Radio Kings. I was able to go into Photoshop and cut out the drumheads on the floor tom. What you're hearing is my floor tom, and you're seeing my drumhead, but the rim and the shell are an overlay of the rest of the kit. You can see a little bit of movement at one time when I hit the splash cymbal; you can see mine fade in and out real quick. And the still image of Buddy's kit obviously stays the same, but you see one of my lugs move a little bit on the rack tom. Same thing with the cowbell. It's a picture of his cowbell over mine.

I had to do some experimenting, with both solos, to make sure I had the right angles. I figured if people were going to see it, I didn't want to have any regrets. I wanted to get it right the first time.
MD: It's hard for a viewer not to smile and laugh while watching this. It's serious playing, but there's a lightness and a sense of fun to it at the same time. Is that something you were in touch with?
Eric: Yeah, I can understand that for sure. It's somebody going over the top. But I figured if I was going to do it, I had to do it over the top.

To see Fischer's Buddy Rich videos and transcriptions, go to ***moderndrummer.com****.*

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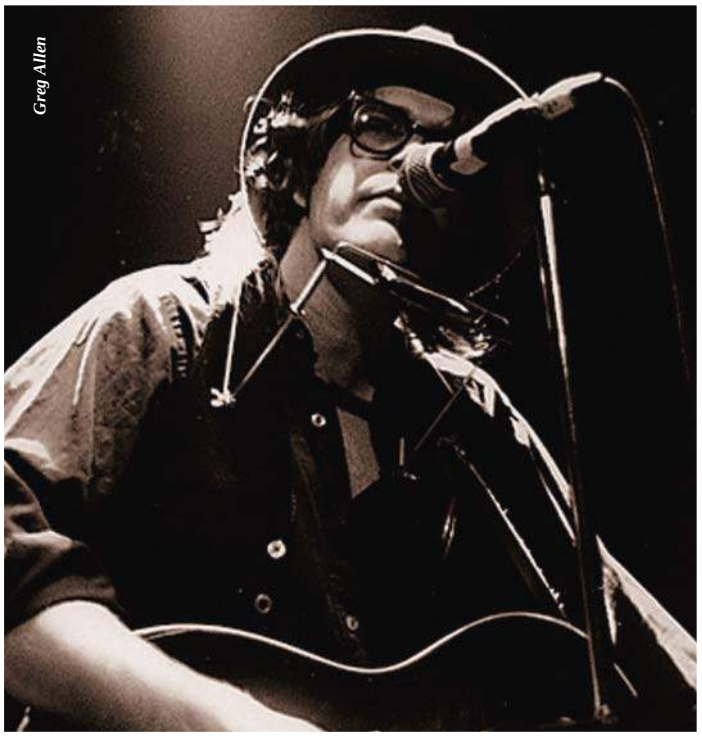
PETER CASE

by Matt North


Greg Allen

The "songwriter's songwriter," who's worked intimately with a number of drumming greats, **on what it takes to capture the magic.**

Peter Case is one of America's most gifted songwriters. His thirty-year-plus career has spanned soul-punk bandleader to solo acoustic troubadour to producer, author, and music educator. And with his recent release, *Let Us Now Praise Sleepy John*, we can add three-time Grammy nominee. Case's '80s power-pop group, the Plimsouls, packed concert halls worldwide and left a mark with the hit "A Million Miles Away."

"If you haven't studied soul music, I don't think you can really play the Who or Zeppelin."

Produced by T Bone Burnett, Case's 1986 self-titled solo album met instant critical acclaim and attracted legendary drumming talents Jerry Marotta and Jim Keltner. The songwriter even inspired Bruce Springsteen to tell *Rolling Stone* magazine, "I listen to Peter Case more than anyone else." Here, Peter offers *MD* readers his take on the drummer's role in the writing and recording process.

THE PLIMSOULS

Whenever a great record is made, it's because everybody on the session is trying to accomplish the same thing. It's an obvious point, but that's ground zero. That was true in the Plimsouls, with drummer Louie Ramirez. Louie was completely dedicated to the group's sound, and we worked to make the grooves as much of the composition as any other part of the song.

When the Plimsouls started we weren't the greatest musicians, we just kept working until we got it right. We were like the '69 Mets; as the season went on, things heated up and eventually we played great. Sometimes drum parts came easily. We tried different versions of each song, but mostly the right choices found us.

If you get into a state of inspiration and things come to you in that state, they're usually right. You're not forcing it. If you're open to the music, your intuition knows what's right. And that's the way to work.

BUFFALO ROOTS AND GARY MALLABER

When I was growing up in Buffalo, I fell into playing in bands with older musicians. There was this guy, Stan Szelest, who played piano for Ronnie Hawkins. Garth Hudson told me Stan was the guy who taught the Band how to play music. When I played with these guys, it wasn't about far-out musical expression. It was about falling into a groove and making people dance. Everybody played a different component, and each part added up to one groove. The drummer wasn't the only person playing "the groove." My whole attitude about how music was played came out of that.

This is the scene Gary Mallaber came from. He was a hero of ours. I started watching Mallaber when he was sixteen and already getting calls for sessions in New York City. Gary sought out Van Morrison in the Village when Van was playing acoustic and convinced him he needed a rhythm section—then Gary went off and put together Van's first [post-Them] band. Gary's the "Moondance" drummer…and he was just nineteen when he recorded that. Can you believe that? Then he did all the Steve Miller hits, like "The Joker," "Swingtown," and "Jet Airliner."

Van's records "Domino" and "Blue Money" are very similar to the Buffalo sound. Van Morrison and John Lennon used to come over from New York to find Buffalo musicians. It was a school of music, a real city sound. So years later, when Gary recorded my album *Six-Pack Of Love*, we had a common framework. Gary used to say, "You know, man, sometimes you just gotta play the big, stupid riff." He could

always find a huge, killer riff, and the song would be a hit. Gary wants to play on hit records, and that's where he's coming from.

GET IT IN YOUR BODY

What attracts me is a quality that's in the body. You get it in there by listening to good music, funky music, and letting your body move to it. You probably get it in there by listening to it at a young age, but you also get it by putting yourself in those worlds. I heard Jim Keltner talking to Ry Cooder about fife-and-drum bands down in Mississippi. Keltner was saying that if you get near that stuff it gets in your body. It's a feel you have to absorb. That's what takes music to another level—not virtuoso technique, but guys who have that feel.

THOSE INCREDIBLE ENGLISH DRUMMERS, LIKE BONHAM, CHARLIE, RINGO, MICKEY WALLER…they were coming from a different place from drummers who came later. When Keith Moon showed up with double bass drums, well, Keith had studied records. Moon's whole approach was based on the Motown fills. So when he invented that wild, explosive drumming, it all came from his soul influence. It's why they described the Who as "Maximum R&B." But then you take drummers who try to imitate Moon…if they miss that connection to soul, it sounds overwhelmingly heavy. Bonham was the same thing. If you haven't studied soul, I don't think you can really play the Who or Zeppelin.

JERRY MAROTTA

Around 1983 I made my first solo record, with T Bone Burnett producing. I had this idea for the album, "tribal folk." I wanted Appalachian-style music with heavy tribal rhythms carrying tunes in ways that folk hadn't ever been carried. Jerry came into the studio with a screwdriver and a Linn drum machine for my song "Three

"I was blown away right from the first playing. These cymbals have a unique earthiness and feel that fit my playing perfectly. Dream cymbals are fresh and excitingly different!"
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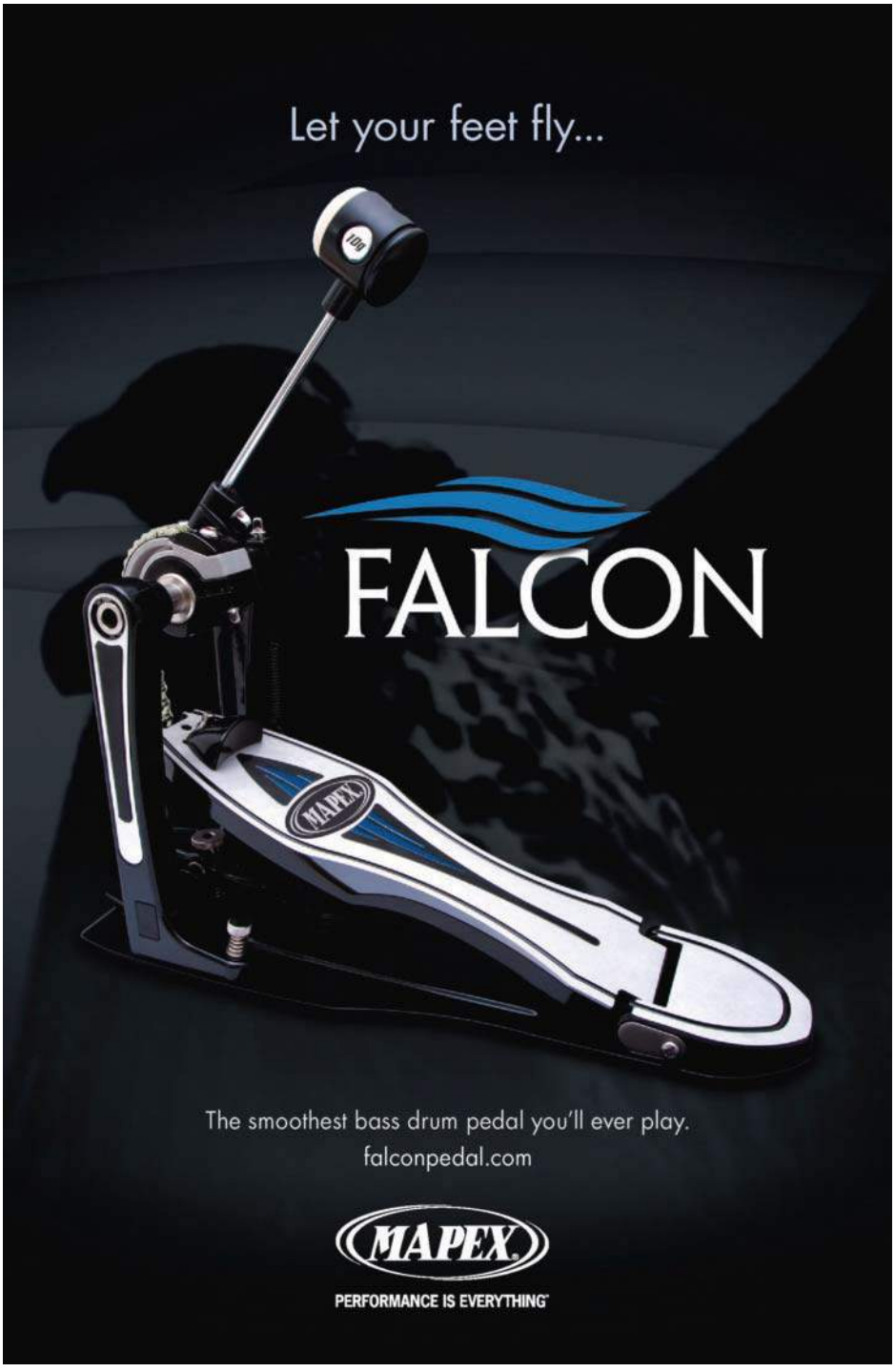

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Days Straight." He opened the Linn up with the screwdriver and switched the chip for the kick drum with the chip for the snare, then the cymbals with the toms. He switched everything. Then he'd just play it like a regular instrument and create these insane floating grooves. His brother, Rick Marotta, came by the studio that day and listened to the whole thing. When it was over he said to Jerry, "I'm telling Mom."

DON HEFFINGTON

Don played on *Sings Like Hell, Torn Again*, and a track on *Full Service No Waiting*. He's played with Bob Dylan, Emmylou Harris, Lucinda Williams, and tons of others. I used to play this dive called the Place in El Monte and saw Don all the time there. He's a master of old beats; he's studied so many grooves from old records, his vocabulary is enormous. On *Torn Again* I basically gambled my whole budget to record at Capitol. We had a difficult first day and didn't get one take. There was a lot of stopping to get sounds, and we never found a flow. The next day, we figured the bugs were worked out so it should come together. Then the same thing started happening—not one take. So I'm seeing my whole career pass before my eyes, and I'm getting edgy. It got down to one hour left of studio time, so I told Don, "Okay, let's pretend it's the last set at the Place in El Monte. We'll do each song once." And we cut the whole album that way. Every track on *Torn Again* is from that final hour. Don will hang in there with you as long as it takes.

JIM KELTNER

The thing to learn from Jim is how he "refreshes the beat" as songs grow, meaning he'll turn it around with surprises, add or subtract something, but always hold a common pulse. He never plows forward with a cemented pattern. It sounds like his main influences are country-blues guitarists, because he plays drums the way Lightnin' Hopkins plays guitar, meaning everything slides forward, never gets too heavy, and always swings. He is the slipperiest, greasiest slip-n-slide drummer.

Jim was on my record *The Man With The Blue Post Modern Fragmented Neo-Traditionalist Guitar*. I talk about how drummers should follow the vocals… well, Jim is a drummer who asked to read the lyrics. He cares about the story being told. I came from playing in bands, so I had a concept of what "session guys" were, but my experience with it was completely different. A hack is someone who'll do something that they don't care about for money, but I never got that feeling from anyone. Jim is completely invested and cares deeply about getting what's right for the track. Pretty much every take was usable. He had tone, composition, and feel—it's all there.

IT'S WHAT YOU DON'T PLAY

It's mysterious why some guys capture a signature sound with simple drumming. We have fingerprints, DNA, and painters have distinct brushstrokes. It's the same with drums. All the great drummers we love have a unique thing we can't put our finger on. Like Al Jackson Jr.—everyone says, "He's playing behind the beat." No, he's not, he's right there in the groove. Can anyone really articulate what he's doing? It's just a way of trying to explain something very complicated, a signature sound that comes from the body. I remember when I was a kid, reading an interview with Booker T. and his band. Al Jackson said that you never throw in a fill unless it makes the next beat sound better. Never throw in ornamentation. Al understood the line we always hear: It's what you don't play that's important.

Matt North records and teaches privately in Los Angeles. He performs and records with Jesse DeNatale, Maria McKee, and the Clutter Family. For more info, visit gooddrummer.com.

"I WAS A 'MAPLE GUY' FOR YEARS, BUT AFTER PLAYING BUBINGA/BIRCH DRUMS THERE'S NO DOUBT I'LL STICK WITH THESE FOR A LONG TIME. B/B'S HAVE ALL THE QUALITIES OF TRADITIONAL MAPLE KITS, AND SO MUCH MORE! THE COMBINATION OF LOW-END FROM THE BUBINGA AND MID/HIGH ATTACK OF THE BIRCH COVERS THE WHOLE TUNING SPECTRUM, BOTH LIVE AND IN THE STUDIO!"

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BILLY RYMER
Dillinger Escape Plan

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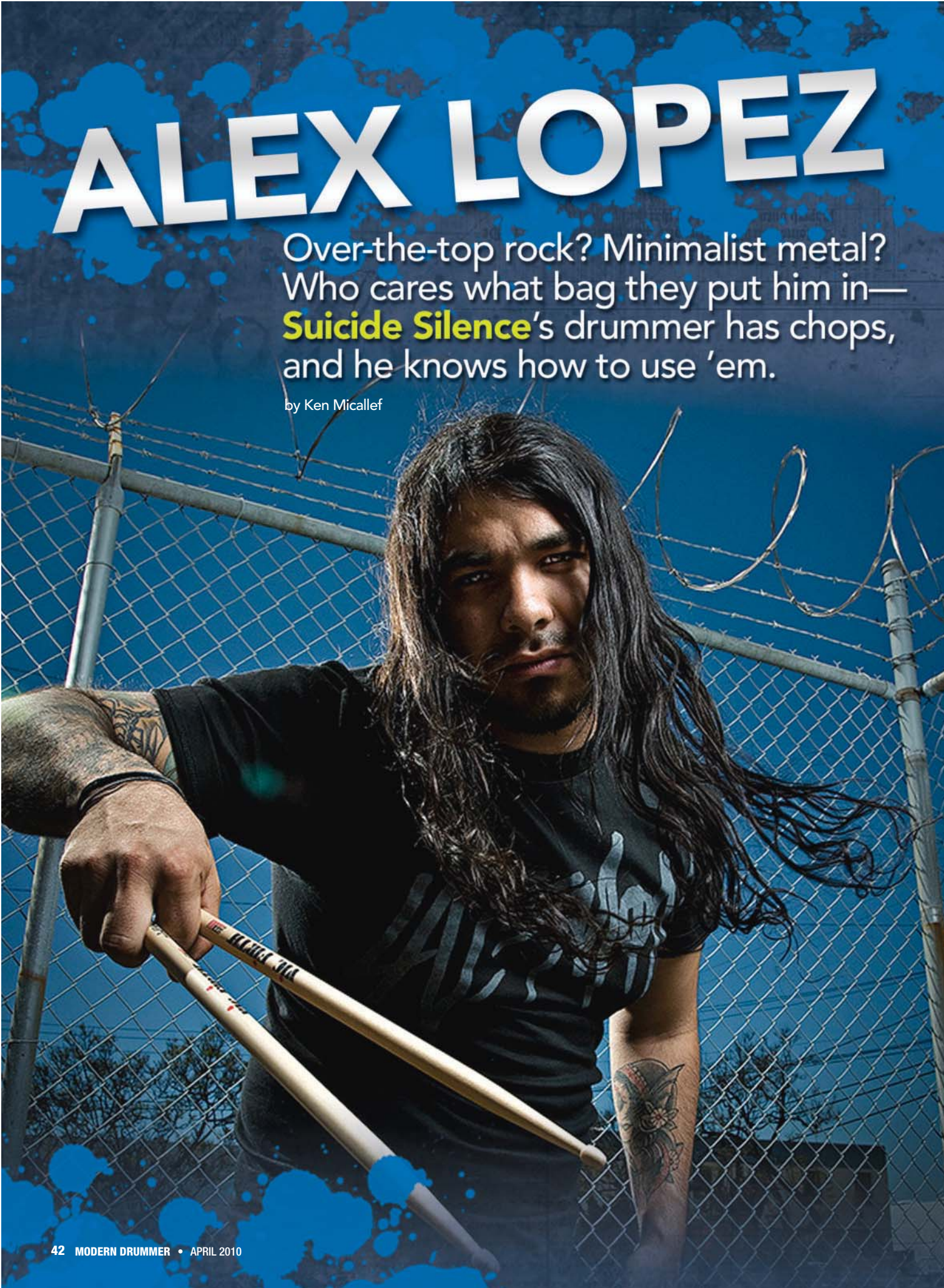
ALEX LOPEZ

Over-the-top rock? Minimalist metal? Who cares what bag they put him in—**Suicide Silence**'s drummer has chops, and he knows how to use 'em.

by Ken Micallef



Suicide Silence's Alex Lopez knows what it takes to survive and thrive in the deathcore metal scene. Lopez plays guitar almost as well as he plays drums, contributes songwriting skills to every Suicide Silence track, and is an accomplished oil painter and draftsman. And though he admits that success is often about being in the right place at the right time, he also believes you'd better be prepared to waste the drumming competition if you're determined to make the band.

Lopez's second Suicide Silence album, *No Time To Bleed*, reveals his artistic temperament, his arranging skills, and the raw power of his metal drumming. He plays manic blast beats and speedball rolls, but encompassed within a unique approach that upends deathcore's rigid rules. Describing himself as a rock drummer in a metal band, Lopez displays articulate tom phrasing that recalls prog-rock masters, not his hero, Dave Grohl. His elegant use of space brings to mind a '70s art-rock drummer (or Killswitch Engage's mighty Justin Foley), but Lopez is more likely to credit Deftones' Abe Cunningham. And while there's no doubting Alex's Vinnie Paul fixation, his inventive style also invokes influences like Danny Carey and Joey Jordison.

When he was a kid in high school dreaming of joining a band, Lopez would lock himself away in his bedroom with a tape recorder, a guitar, and drums and create his future. His big imagination has paid off, and it shows no signs of stopping on *No Time To Bleed.*

ARTFUL DODGER

MD: Your drumming on *No Time To Bleed* is very articulate, clean, and clear. That's not always the case in grindcore or deathcore.

Alex: My cleanness comes from listening to Dave Grohl, Abe Cunningham, and Danny Carey. Growing up, I had older brothers who played, and we'd switch off on bass, drums, and guitar. And I played with records—a lot of Nirvana, Deftones, Tool, Sevendust, Metallica, and Pantera. Mainly I was interested in Dave Grohl, because he hits really hard. He's not about being too flashy. It's about being solid and beating the crap out of the drums.

MD: Do you craft a specific part for each song with Suicide Silence?

Alex: I try to give every song its technique, just so each song can sound different and be interesting for the listener. A particular beat might not be a cool beat—it might not be a technical part—but it's still good, and it maintains the integrity of the song. That keeps it interesting.

MD: You admire Grohl's heavy hitting, but your drumming has an artistic bent. Like at the end of "Disengage," when the band drops out and you're playing the rhythm, solo.

Alex: That's a prime example of doing something that's not necessarily needed, but it's subtle. You could listen to it and remember just that part. Someone who doesn't even play drums but who likes that song could at least play that.

MD: Even a guitarist could play that.

Alex: Yes, and I've been playing guitar as long as drums. At home I record songs and play drums and guitar. And aside from music, I'm an oil painter and I draw. We sell my artwork at the merch table and online. I usually paint on drumheads or pieces of wood. I like Monet and Diego Rivera.

MD: That artistic temperament surely affects your drumming.

Alex: A song is like an empty canvas. You have your tools—your paintbrushes, your instruments—and then it's up to you to paint the picture. It's

Lopez plays a **TAMA** Starclassic Birch/Bubinga kit, including 9x10, 10x12, and 11x13 toms; a 16x16 floor tom; and 20x22 bass drums. His snares are a 6½x13 **PEARL** Joey Jordison signature (main), a 6½x13 Tama John Blackwell signature (main/backup), and a 7x13 **PORK PIE** brass (backup). /// His **SABIAN** cymbals include 15" Stage Hats, a 20" AAX X-Plosion crash, a 20" AAX Metal crash, a 19" AAX X-Plosion crash, a 22" HH Power Bell ride, a 19" AAX X-Treme China, a 20" Paragon China, a 10" HH splash, and a 10" AAX splash. /// Alex's heads include **REMO** coated Emperors on the snares and clear Pinstripes on the toms and an **AQUARIAN** Super Kick II on the bass drums. /// His hardware includes a **GIBRALTAR** rack, Tama and **DW** cymbal stands, Pearl Eliminator bass drum pedals with Tama Iron Cobra beaters, and a Pearl Eliminator hi-hat stand. /// He plays **VIC FIRTH** Alex Lopez signature (Extreme 5A) sticks.

good not to over-paint or under-paint. Do enough to make a difference, and make it sound good.

BREAKING DOWN

MD: Suicide Silence is renowned for utilizing multiple tempo shifts, or "breakdowns." Within any given song, the band might go from straight time to half time to double time. Do you maintain an internal 8th- or 16th-note pulse?

Alex: Our stuff is technical to a point, but usually it's just straightforward start/stop. I play with in-ear monitors and usually the guitars and kick drums cranking. I just try to pay attention to that. But usually I count four—the average thing that pops in my head so I can keep time.

MD: You have a wider tonal palette than many deathcore drummers. You don't always trigger bass drums, for example.

Alex: I never trigger bass drums. There are certain forms of music that need triggering. We've toured with Behemoth and Nile; they need triggers because the kicks are going so fast. Inferno from Behemoth, [the way he tunes] his kicks is based on how light he hits. I've screwed around on Inferno's kit, and you can go so fast, but in Suicide Silence we don't go very fast, so we don't really need triggers. We have two microphones in each bass drum—one for low frequencies, one for high frequencies.

MD: You also play with a sense of space. You don't fill every bar. Sometimes you're just bashing a simple hi-hat as the music passes around you.

Alex: I like to write music that I like to listen to. Like with Deftones, there are a lot of riffs where it's just a groove with the hi-hat going. Sometimes less is more, and then, when you do come in with something, it stands out more. With some drummers every minute of their playing is an intense ride. I don't want an intense ride the whole time, just a good experience.

METAL MAPPING

MD: Did you track *No Time To Bleed* to a click?

Alex: We preprogrammed the click track to find out what tempo worked best where. There was more of a mechanical perspective to it. It was a borderline thing. If we change the tempo here or there and it's the same riff, no one will notice the time difference if it's only 3 bpm. It's that little difference that sometimes helps a song. Our first album, *The Cleansing*, was completely live. We didn't compile takes into one good take. Most of the time we just used one track; it was *really* live.

MD: So you were tempo mapping.

Alex: But not every single part. Our producer wanted to keep a lot of things off [the map]. When it came to certain punch-ins, the riff before the punch-in would be in time with the click, but as soon as it punched in, he'd make us play naturally. Like if the end of a song was just 8th notes, he would make us play those notes naturally. The end of "Disengage," for example, wasn't done to a click. I just freely did that on my own. The tempo mapping was for the main part of the song, but when it came to certain things to get that natural feel, he had us play without the click. And some breakdowns were done without the click because they were really, really slow.

BLASTING SILENCE

MD: What is your current practice regimen?

Alex: I've been getting into Thomas Pridgen, who was in the Mars Volta. I have no idea what he's doing or what time signature he's playing in. But he's awesome. I wouldn't want to be known as that style of drummer, but when I'm practicing I'm all about drinking coffee and jamming along with Mars Volta records. I try to dissect Pridgen's parts. He does a lot of ghost hits with his snare combined with his foot pedal. It might take me a week to adapt something from his playing. But that will increase my speed and help my reaction time. So when I'm playing Euro blast beats and doing faster stuff, it helps out with fills.

MD: Do you practice snare drum technique, linear patterns, double bass?

Alex: Yeah. Every day on tour for at least twenty minutes I'm on the kit. I practice paradiddles applied to the drumset. The bass drum usually follows the right-handed hi-hat, with my left hand on the snare drum. But the right hand is usually more hits than the bass drum alone.

MD: Your blast beats are super-clear. How have you developed that clarity?

Alex: Hit hard and quick and react really fast. Once I hit it, I don't let anything drag. I've been blasting for so long that it just comes naturally. I'm very observant. I find myself watching other drummers, and I've noticed that they do it sloppy

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and I don't like how it sounds. If you hit clean, it will sound clean.

MD: Do you work on your blast beats away from the stage?

Alex: Blast beats are all pretty much the same. The only difference is you can do accents within the blast beat. Usually before a set I am beating a practice pad and doing 500 hits with each hand to build up my stamina. And I play accents with one hand while the other hand is blasting. Or if one hand is playing 16th notes [sings] and the other is playing syncopated 8th notes around it [sings again], I'll switch them up, or alternate. I'll create a pattern. It usually floats around; I repeat it back and forth.

MD: The 8th-note pattern you just sang is similar to the part in "Genocide." The main snare drum rhythm is static, but there are other notes bouncing around it.

Alex: That's exactly where that stuff will come into play. Sometimes I'll be working on that and the band will write their riff around the accents I'm adding. Other times, they'll write a riff and it sounds like I could just blast through, but I might blast and add other things around it.

MD: During the guitar solo in "Wake Up," you play snare accents in unusual places. It's not the expected pattern.

Alex: I used to practice that rhythm by myself. I would jam that. I am a huge Tomas Haake fan. That's a Meshuggah-ish part. I built the pattern with my feet and just threw the snare in there. It was more complex originally. The guitarists in the band turned it into a song.

MD: You play military rolls in the intro to "…And Then She Bled." The rolls sound lazy, indistinct.

Alex: We could have used a drum machine if we wanted them to sound perfect. I wanted to make it sound like I was behind the track breathing, playing it, and going through the mood—jamming on the snare by itself to make it sound not so fake. It's all double strokes. It's a little Abe Cunningham influenced.

MD: What are you playing in the first groove section of "Your Creations"?

Alex: It's a Euro blast, basically a fast funk beat. It's extremely fast. That's the same for "Genocide." It's a Euro blast beat playing the accents with both hands, depending on the guitar riff.

MD: Ultimately, where do you want to take your drumming?

Alex: It's hard to get recognition as a drummer unless you're touched by God. I've thought about doing a solo record, but I don't know what it would sound like. I do get thanks for putting drum lessons on *MD*'s Web site. And I did one for our label. These ten-year-old kids don't know all these fast death metal bands; their parents won't let them listen to Cannibal Corpse. But they can listen to Suicide Silence, Disturbed, or Slipknot. That helps get us out of the deathcore scene.

METAL MASHUP

MD: How does your guitar playing affect your drumming?

Alex: It has affected it in a good way. Sometimes the guitarist will get a riff and I won't understand it at all. I can't tell where it stops and starts. Where most drummers will try to hear it, I'll have my guitarist play it to me so I understand it. It works out better because I can write a drum part based on my knowledge of the guitar. I relate how the guitarist is picking his strings to how I'm playing the snare, hi-hat, and kick. My style has never been on the death metal side of things. It's not really fast and crazy. I am more of a rock drummer who plays metal.

MD: That's refreshing.

Alex: I get a lot of weird comments that I'm not death metal enough. Or if I'm around real rock drummers, they say, "You play the craziest stuff ever!" You realize that death metal drummers concentrate more on their Axis pedals and having their drumheads really tight with a pillow in the bass drum with triggers. They build their kit on their technique. I want to be able to play a kit whether it's miked or not and in any type of room—or even outside—and not be freaked out because I don't have my trigger module. That's why I am just a rock drummer playing metal.

MD: What's the secret to your success?

Alex: Being in the right place at the right time. But be good at what you do, and be ready. It doesn't always matter how well you play the drums. So many bands have lacking musicians. Bands have deadbeats and alcoholics; they're not good musicians. But maybe that one guy was in the right place at the right time. That's how life is. But aside from all that, you have to be able to back up your talk. If you tell a dude you can do it, you'd better be able to pull it off. Or you are just lying to yourself.

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STEVEN DROZD

J. Michelle Martin-Coyne

The unfamiliar beats and tones of the Flaming Lips' trailblazing new studio album, *Embryonic*, were born from double-drummer experiments conducted in an empty house. How the timekeepers in rock's most exploratory band define *invention*.

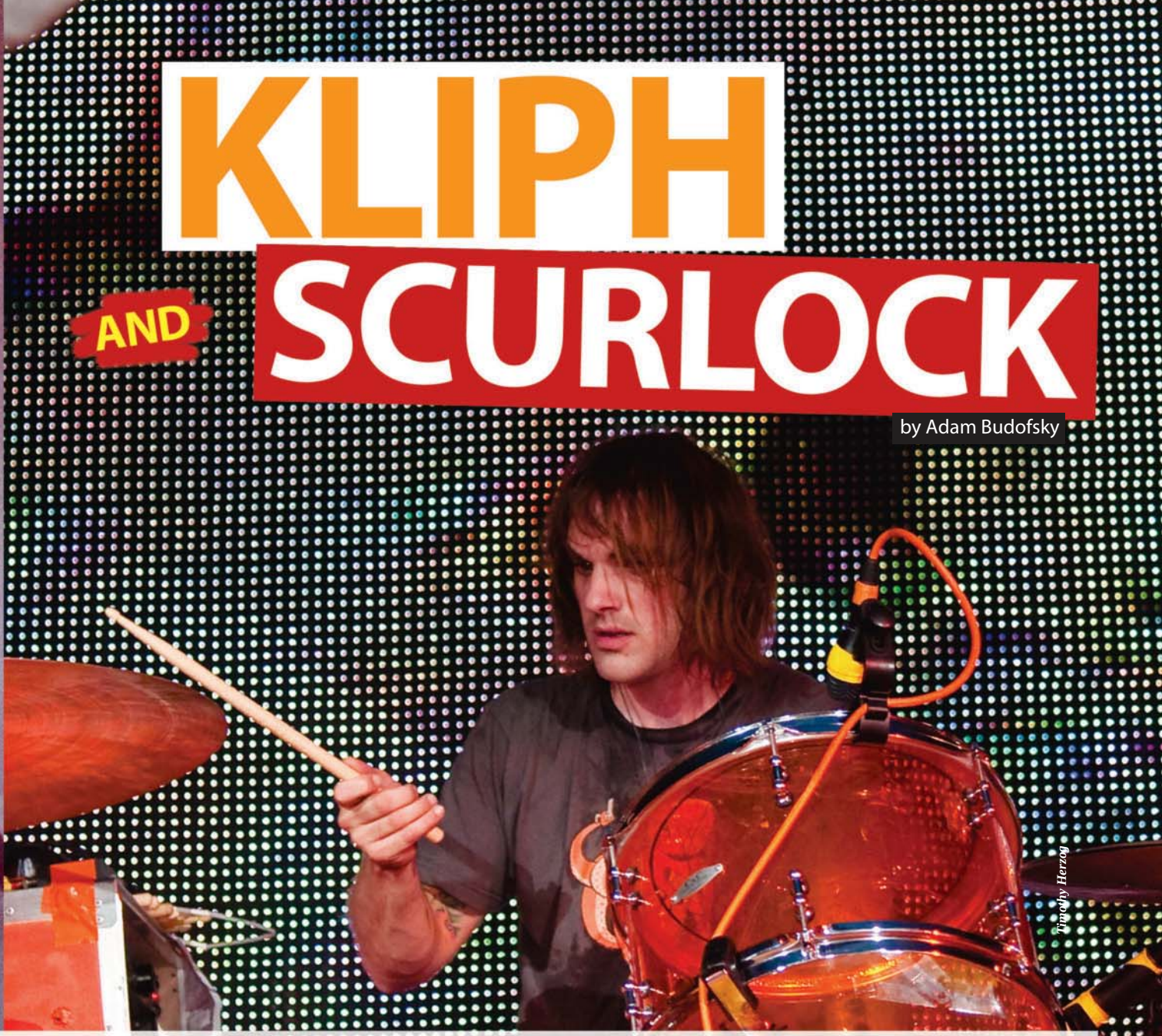
There's an old adage that says a rock group's first album is the culmination of everything its members have experienced up to that point in their lives, while its second reflects happenings from only the previous year or two. Hence the tendency of your average band to go through the dreaded "sophomore slump," and the inability to ever again grab audiences with the shock of the new quite like they did the first time.

As many music fans are aware, the Flaming Lips are not your average rock group. And they're never short of ways to draw attention—or keep it. Since 1984, the band of musical "amateurs" from Norman, Oklahoma, has continually reinvented itself, introducing new players, sounds, and recording techniques—even coming up with novel ways for audiences to experience live and recorded music. All the while, they've remained loyal to the idea of tickling listeners' imaginations with various modes of psychedelic noisemaking and consistently touching fans' hearts with their deep humanistic streak. (There's a reason the heartstring-tugging 2002 cut "Do You Realize??" was made the official rock song of Oklahoma.) They also have a lovable penchant for never taking themselves too seriously; witness their obsession with balloons, confetti, and performing in animal costumes.

When Steven Drozd joined Lips founders Wayne Coyne (guitar, vocals) and Michael Ivins (bass) in 1993, no one—Steven included—could have imagined the changes his presence would inspire. Drozd signed up just in time for the band's first big album, *Transmissions From The Satellite Heart*, which featured the left-field hit "She Don't Use Jelly" and highlighted hugely grooving, hook-filled drumming. "Jelly" earned the group a lot of press, but universal adulation would come five years later with the Lips' magnificent ninth album, *The Soft Bulletin*. That record placed the band at the top of many year-end top-ten lists. And, perhaps more important, it reflected Drozd's increased creative involvement as a guitarist, keyboardist, and composer.

KLIPH AND SCURLOCK

by Adam Budofsky



Timothy Herzog

Drozd's role as a multi-instrumentalist extended to the stage, to the point where he was playing guitar and keyboards in concert along to a video projection of himself playing drums. That approach lasted until 2002, when Beck invited the group to open for him on his *Sea Change* tour and to act as his backup band during his sets. Kliph Scurlock, who had been a roadie for the Lips since 1999, was tapped to play kit on the tour, and he so impressed his employers that he was asked to remain as the permanent touring drummer.

Embryonic, the Lips' latest album (not counting their recent full-length tribute to Pink Floyd's *Dark Side Of The Moon*), is the first to feature Scurlock on drums. He rises to the occasion, showing a strong Drozd influence but also highlighting his own skills, which are significant. *Embryonic* is a serious change of direction for the band, which largely abandons the majestic symphonic pop of earlier efforts for the trance-like grooves and anything-can-happen vibe of late-period Miles Davis and German progressive groups such as Can and Faust. Like Drozd, Scurlock had to rethink some of his own natural tendencies as a player, and he ultimately dived deep into the eerie musical waters, adding an intense in-the-moment feel and dramatic full-kit flourishes to many of the tracks.

MD interviewed Drozd and Scurlock separately during the All Tomorrow's Parties festival in Monticello, New York, which the Lips curated and closed with a midnight concert in typical sensory-overload fashion. We were lucky enough to view the show from right behind Steven's guitar amps, allowing us to experience the Lips from the eye of the hurricane. We're still amazed that a group of musicians could hold it all together with so much going on around them, but to Steven, Kliph, and the rest, it's just another day at the office, bringing beats and blowing minds.

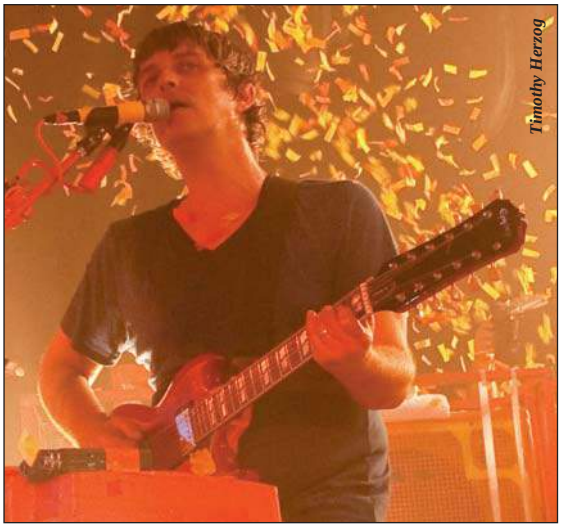
THE NOT-SO-NEW KID ON THE BLOCK: KLIPH SCURLOCK JOINS THE FRAY

MD: Tell us about your background.

Kliph: My mom was a trumpet player in an all-female mariachi band. She and three of the other gals were killed in a hotel accident in Kansas City in 1981. There's a memorial statue of the four of them in Topeka, and there's a documentary being made about their band right now.

MD: Do you remember watching her play?

Kliph: When I was young I'd go to their band practice. It was really cool to watch my mom and these other gals play music. I don't think they knew that they were doing anything radical by being in an all-female mariachi band. And she was the one white person in the band; the rest were full-blooded Mexicans. The other gals would go to Mexico a couple times a year to visit family, and they'd bring back records. My mom would take the records home, listen, and write out everybody's parts. She had a really good ear. She could play pretty much any instrument you put in front of her.



FEARLESS BEATS

"Turn It On"/"Pilot Can At The Queer Of God," *Transmissions From The Satellite Heart*, 1993. The one-two punch that leads off the Lips' sixth album introduces Steven Drozd in grand fashion. "Turn It On" features a typically deceptive Drozd beat, the trickery being nothing more than Steven's ridiculously easy way with an offbeat bass drum hit, in this case on the "a" before 2 and 4. The blistering snare fill in the fourth bar of the rideout is the first indication that Drozd is way more than just the groove machine who's rocked the previous four minutes. "Turn It On" segues into "Pilot Can…" with a neat intro snare/bass figure, which Drozd reprises later in the song. It's a simple hook, but an effective one. And it's heavy (and musical) as all get-out.

"March Of The Rotten Vegetables," *Zaireeka*, 1997. The full mix of each of *Zaireeka*'s eight shambling, experimental songs is strewn across four discs, making the collection more of a "listening experience" than a proper album. (The idea was for fans to play the discs simultaneously on four different sound systems, thereby introducing randomness and intensifying the social aspect of hearing recorded music.) Drozd gets his rocks off, and *good*, on this cut. At 2:15 the tune's lullaby-like tone is broken by the drummer erupting with one of his favorite grooves, a sort of James Brown/John Bonham–derived funk-rock pattern full of tantalizing ghost strokes, a perfectly placed snare backbeat on the "&" of 3, the red-needle room sound introduced on *Satellite Heart*'s "Slow Nerve Action," and a copious use of phasing and other super-psychedelic effects. Dump the whole album into GarageBand and experience the full power of the playfully shocking mix.

"Flight Test," *Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots*, 2002. Another great opening track, and another collection of delightful Drozd ideas. The way Steven's snare and bass drum answer each other on this song gives it its buoyancy. Listen also to the introduction of a second hi-hat track (or is that a brushed snare?), providing just that much more texture and interest to the rhythm bed. Simple touches like this are easy to miss the first or second time around, but close inspection reveals that Drozd's recordings are filled with subtle nuances, always with the result of adding greater sonic interest to Lips songs.

"Convinced Of The Hex," "See The Leaves," "Your Bats," "Scorpio Sword," *Embryonic*, 2009. It's remarkable that after twenty-five years of nonstop unpredictability, the Lips have in fact made their biggest break with the past on *Embryonic*. "Convinced Of The Hex" has its genesis in the early double-drum experiments conducted by Drozd and Kliph Scurlock, and its head-down charge into drony Can/Miles territory announces *Embryonic*'s M.O. right from the start. On "See The Leaves" Scurlock gets to strut his stuff, as he lays down an awesome stuttering groove punctuated by copious 32nd-note runs. "Your Bats" finds Drozd playing a boppish beat and a strange repeating tom/snare figure that alone separates this cut from all others in the Lips canon. Scurlock takes the reins again on "Scorpio Sword," which comes off like the incidental music for a spaghetti western set on Jupiter. Kliph's huge, scorching fills paint a menacing diorama.

MD: When did your own musical life begin?

Kliph: I took guitar lessons when I was four or five, and then when my mom took me to see *The Kids Are Alright* at a drive-in theater, as soon as I saw Keith Moon I said, "That's what I want to do." When I was ten, an uncle gave me a cousin's old snare drum, and then I joined the school band. I would practice rudiments at home. I got my first drumset when I was sixteen and pretty much immediately joined a cover band. When I was seventeen I joined a punk rock band in Lawrence, then moved up there. Most of the stuff I've learned has come from playing with other people, learning how to be sympathetic to a song and not just be a lead instrument all the time.

MD: Like Steven, you were a fan of the Lips before you joined.

Kliph: Yes, just obsessive. I lost a couple of jobs because I'd go and follow the Lips around for a week. They'd say, "We're not going to let you off work," so I'd be like, "Okay, then I quit."

One of the things I always loved about the Lips as a fan is what I love now being in the band. There's always this kind of restless spirit. I never get a chance to get bored. As soon as I start thinking, *Alright, I've got this thing down*, it's like, "Nope, now we're going *this* way."

MD: You were a roadie for them between 1999 and 2002 and then began playing with them for the Beck tour. Tell us how that came together.

Kliph: I went with them to L.A. for rehearsals just to be on hand, because nobody knew what the situation was going to be. When we got there, Beck didn't know that even though Steven played drums on the records, live the drums were on tape and he would play guitar and keyboards. So we're there and there's no drummer, and Wayne says, "You play drums, right? Well, we need somebody, so get up there." So I just started practicing with them. The plan was that the Flaming Lips would open up, and then it would be Beck with the Flaming Lips backing him. At that point Steven was playing drums on two songs live during the Lips' set, so there was a drumset there. About twenty minutes before the first show it all kind of sunk in: *Oh my God, I'm playing with my favorite band, and I'm actually, for the first time, going to earn a paycheck playing drums.*

At first Beck wanted a professional drummer. He said, "There's this pro guy who's played with Alanis Morissette…." But Wayne stuck up for me and said, "We've already been working for a week.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Like Steven Drozd, Kliph Scurlock doesn't officially endorse a particular brand of drum or cymbal, but he plays **C&C** and **Ludwig** kits featuring a 6½x13 snare, an 8x13 rack tom, a 12x16 floor tom, and a 24" kick. "For the recording," he says, "I would either play one of my kits or Steven's **Rogers** set. Then at Tarbox I mostly played Dave Fridmann's old kit. Dave was like, 'Set it up and try it out—it sounds great.' At first I was like, 'Man, this sounds like shit.' But he said, 'Hold on, just play for a minute…now come into the booth and listen to this.' '*What?* This sounds awesome!' I don't understand it, but this kit is always great to record."

Scurlock plays **Istanbul** and **Paiste** cymbals, including 14" hi-hats, a 24" heavy ride, and a 22" crash/ride. "I played a 24" Paiste 2002 series heavy ride for a while and loved it," he says. "And Istanbul just sent me a couple of 26" cymbals, but I couldn't fit them in my case, so they're sitting back at Wayne's house. They sound great, but I can't find a 26" case anywhere! So I only get to use them when we practice."

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If we bring somebody else in now, we've got to backtrack and teach this guy the stuff. Kliph's been here, we're friends with him, and we work well together…we want to use him." Wayne really had to dig his heels in. So I got kind of emotional on Wayne, like, "Thank you *so* much," and he said, "Man, we ought to have you play with *us*. Steven plays 'Race For The Prize' and 'Spoonful Weighs A Ton,' so tomorrow why don't you get up there and play the rest?" "Uh, you mean without rehearsing?" "Yeah, you'll be fine." "Oh…okay." [laughs]

MD: So how did it work out?

Kliph: The first couple shows were a little shaky, but nothing gets you on top of your game quicker than having to do it in front of 5,000 people a night.

MD: You continued to tour with the band after that. When did you become an official member?

Kliph: In the fall of 2008 we started talking about doing another album, and the idea came up to try and do more of a live recording instead of it just being Steven doing everything track by track. Wayne would obviously still do a lot of the writing, but Steven is so talented on any instrument you throw in front of him. Whenever Wayne gets stuck, it's like, "Yeah, Steven, you go do your thing." And he can just do things so quickly. If he comes up with an idea, or if Wayne or Michael or [producer] Dave Fridmann comes up with an idea, he can play it once and it's perfect. This time it was a combination of more of a live approach and building up some songs from scratch at Dave's Tarbox studio in upstate New York.

MD: You started the process by jamming with Steven at his house, correct?

Kliph: Yes. Steven had bought a new house and put the old one on the market right at the time when everything just crashed. He'd left his Pro Tools rig and all of his gear at the old house because he hadn't found a space at the new house yet, so Wayne said, "Why don't we go there and jam on ideas, throw up a couple of mics, and record it in case we do something good." So we did that, and we started getting these little bits of cool stuff. Then we'd take those to Tarbox and expand on them.

MD: Who was playing what at Steven's house?

Kliph: At first it was mostly [me on drums and] him playing other instruments. We did a couple of things where we did two drumsets. Some of those worked well and others didn't. Sometimes there's a difference between what you hear in the room and what's actually getting recorded. We'd be sitting there like, "Wow, this sounds cool!" and then we'd go back and listen to it and we'd just be kind of fighting each other the whole time. But a couple of things were great. The first song on the album, "Convinced Of The Hex," is one where both of us are playing drums. I'm doing more of the rhythm and Steve's doing more of the fills, and that worked really well.

MD: By going through that process, were you able to identify what would make certain things either work or not?

Kliph: There was some of that, but we were working so quickly that if something didn't work we'd move on to something else. Early on in the process Wayne mentioned the idea of trying to

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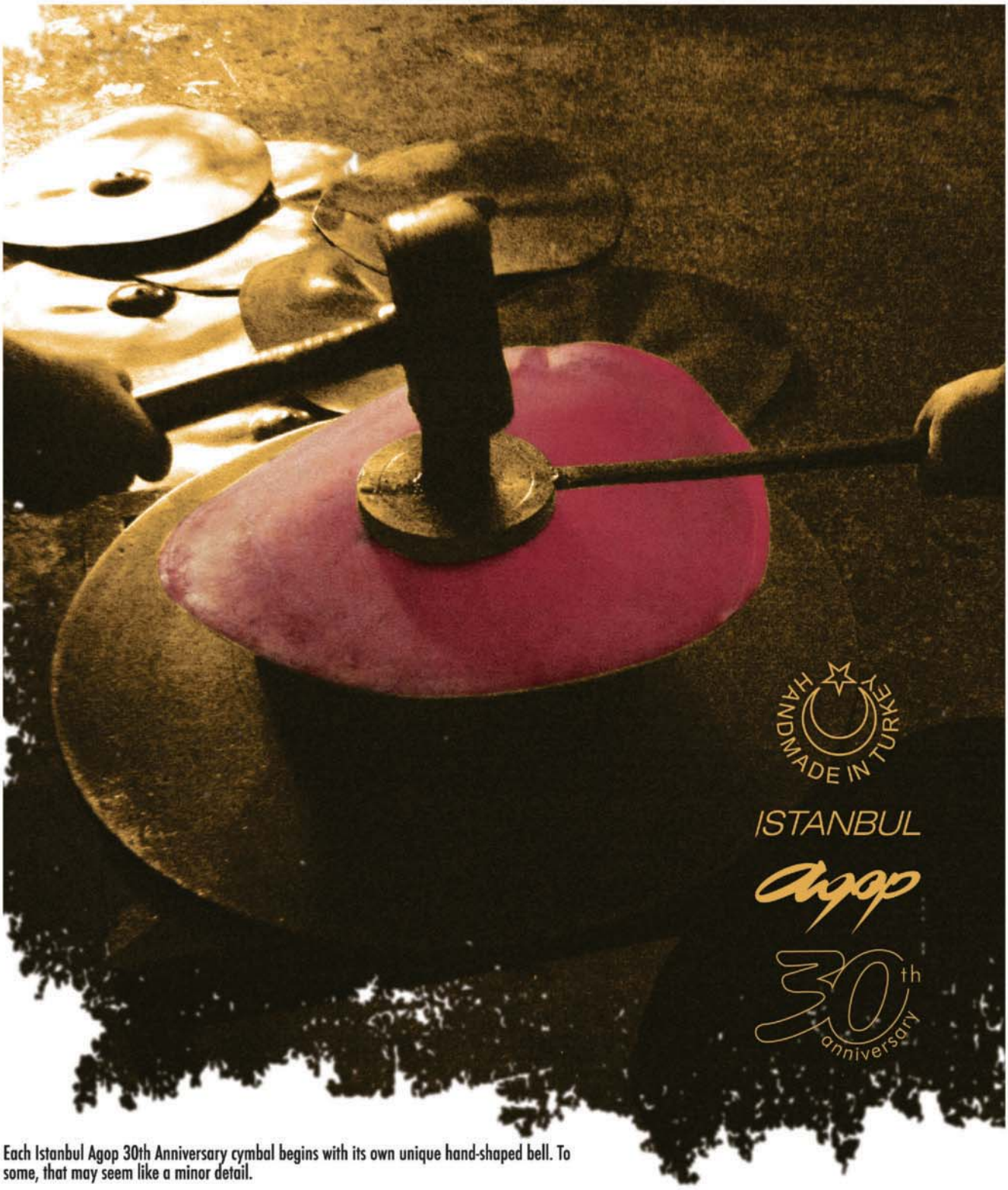

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do a double album, and Steven and I, being big prog rock and Pink Floyd fans, were like, "Yeah, let's do a double album!" But to do a double album in the time frame we were talking about, we had to move fast. Even up at Tarbox it was just go, go, go.

MD: What were some of the songs that you built from the ground up at Tarbox?

Kliph: "See The Leaves" was originally a minute-long tag at the end of a song that ended up getting dropped from the album. Wayne had this bass part and I got this drum thing going, and the plan was that we'd do what we did at Steven's: We'd play for ten minutes, then Dave would find the best bits and edit a minute out of this thing. When we got ready to record it, Wayne said, "Just go nuts, play weird fills, do whatever. If it messes up we'll just edit it out." So we played for ten minutes and I'd do whatever. I didn't land on the 1 a lot of the time and didn't worry about it. We finished, and Dave said, "The first two and a half minutes were great, but after that it kind of lost steam, so I think we'll chop right there." So sitting there for the rest of the day and into the next day as the song got built up, hearing all these mistakes I made, I went, "Wow, are you sure you don't want to edit that out?" "No, it's great." "Yeah, but I land on the 2!"

MD: That must have been tough.

Kliph: Actually, it was one of the best things that could have happened, because before, in other bands, when I'd record I'd be so picky, like, "I've got to do that again." I wanted to do that this time too, but after a couple days of hearing your mistakes over and over again, there's a certain charm in that. So that kind of helped me with the rest of the recording. It became, "Man, just go for it. We'll either record it again or figure something else out." Wayne would say it was like Keith Moon, or I'd think it was like Greg [Saunier] from Deerhoof—who, besides Steven, is the guy I steal from the most. Some of my favorite moments on the record are where we go off the rails.

MD: It must have been encouraging to have the band give you that kind of freedom.

Kliph: I was so nervous at first, like, "Man, I've got to play really good." But they'd be like, "We know you can play well. It's this other sort of freaky thing you get when you're not thinking about it and you're just going for it—*that's* what we want to explore." I'm like, "Okay, I can do that all day long."

MD: Were there times when you got specific direction?

Kliph: Yeah, sometimes Steven would say things like, "If you accent it right here, that would be really cool." Every time I would do one of his suggestions, I'd think, *That sounds awesome—wish I'd thought of that.*

MD: Did you have a particularly hard time with any of the songs?

Kliph: There's a song called "Watching The Planets" where I just couldn't get anything to work. So Steven came in and started doing this beat with his hi-hat foot on each "&." He was like, "I've never done that before. I just thought it sounded cool." It's the only time I've been in a band where somebody else is better at my instrument than I am.

MD: That's got to be hard.

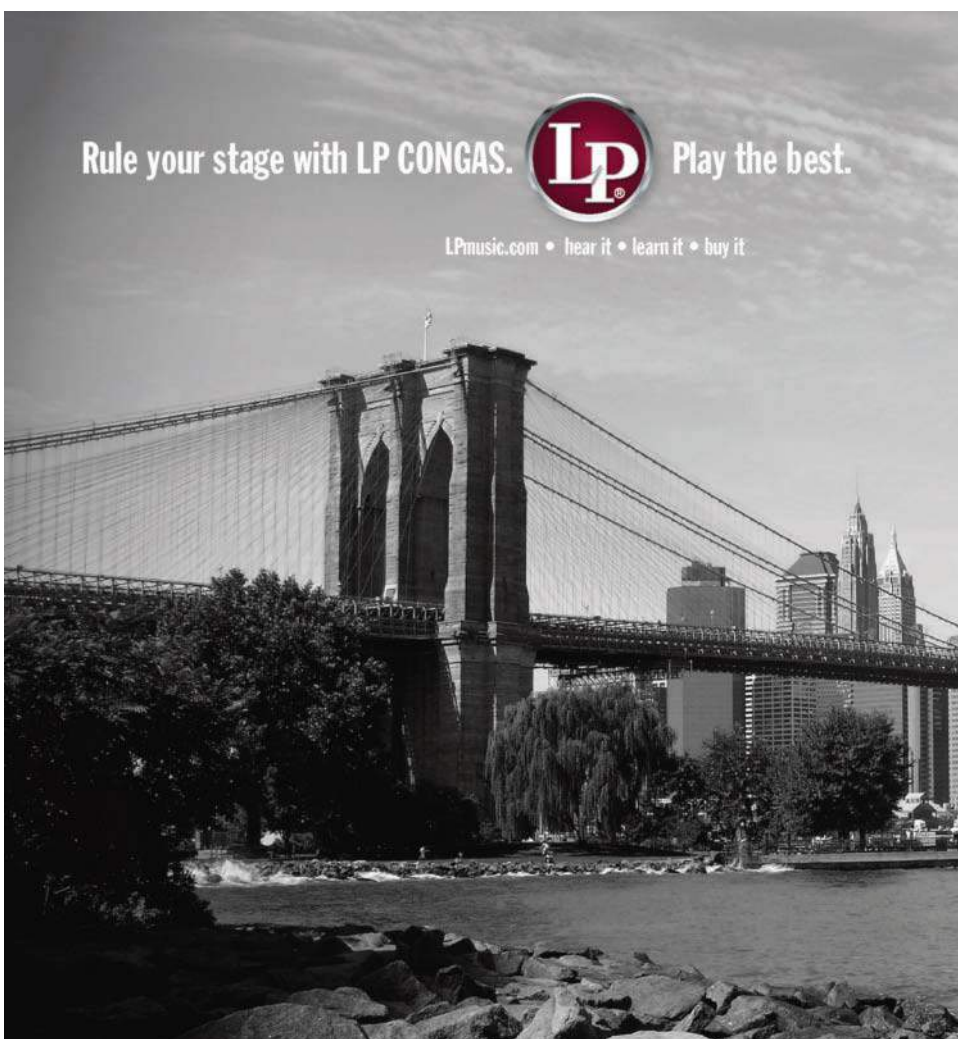
Kliph: It sort of is, but at the same time I just think, *I'm in the Flaming Lips, so f**k it.* [laughs] But really, Wayne doesn't seem to get upset that Steven is a better guitar player, and Michael doesn't get upset that Steven is a better bass player, so I've just got to get over whatever weirdness I have and be glad that I'm here at all. And Steven never has any kind of attitude, like, "I could do that if I wanted to." He was really complimentary about a lot of stuff.

MD: You and the rest of the band genuinely seem to be close friends.

Kliph: That's true. When we're not busy working, I'll go over to Steven's house and watch TV and play with his kids, or just do whatever with Wayne. That's great, because I've seen bands get to a level where they have to work together all the time and the friendship thing starts going by the wayside. But Steven's my best friend, so on days off it's always, "Let's go eat. Let's go see a movie…."

MD: Having been such a big fan of the band, are you comfortable now being a member?

Kliph: I still haven't completely got past it, because if I think about it…. And when Steven sits behind the kit, my jaw still hits the floor at what an awesome



SUNSHINE SUPERMAN

Yet another monster drummer emerges from the land of the Lips: Stardeath And White Dwarfs' **Matt Duckworth**

One day soon people will be able to talk about the band Stardeath And White Dwarfs without referencing the Flaming Lips. (The psychedelic pop group is *way* too good to have to share press space with its hometown heroes forever.) But in the interest of introducing Stardeath drummer Matt Duckworth to *MD* readers, it's worth noting that the band features three ex-Lips roadies among its ranks, as well as Lips leader Wayne Coyne's nephew Dennis Coyne. Wayne has also designed artwork for the band's record covers and directed a video for them, and the two groups recently collaborated on a song-for-song cover of Pink Floyd's seminal album *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, which they performed together in its entirety this past New Year's Eve.

Psychedelic and sonically overblown, Stardeath's debut album, *The Birth*, recalls nothing less than a lost Flaming Lips epic on overdrive. And Duckworth has no problem with the comparison. "We love the Flaming Lips," the twenty-five-year-old drummer says. "We've been around them our whole lives. The influence is impossible to escape. Being a psychedelic rock 'n' roll band from Oklahoma, any band will be compared to the Flaming Lips. You just have to embrace it."

Duckworth plays a "Vanilla Fudge–style" C&C drumkit (7x13 snare, 10x13 and 14x16 toms, and two 24" kicks), which he says is "totally built for live, with big, thick maple shells—it's real loud. I also used a '60s Ludwig kit in the studio." He plays Istanbul cymbals.

The influence of classic rock on Stardeath's universe goes beyond gear. Duckworth and bassist Casey Joseph embrace the era of the long solo, strutting their stuff in the duet "Those Who Are From The Sun Return To The Sun." "In the '70s," the drummer says, "bands did solos all the time, but nobody does that anymore. At a point during our shows, the rest of the band leaves Casey and me to play alone." Duckworth and company aren't just dabbling, either—they have the chops to pull it off, proven by the fact that the studio version of "Those Who Are From The Sun…" was nailed in one take.

Duckworth likes to blow it out but says he's *really* about finding his inner Karen Carpenter. "Our band is all about sound," he explains. "On some songs we used a distortion plug-in on the drum track, for a Bonham sound. On other songs, like 'The Sea Is On Fire' and 'Country Ballad,' we covered the drumheads with paper towels for a flat sound. I'm playing softly on big drums—like Karen Carpenter. I've always been a big fan of that approach." **Ken Micallef**

drummer he is. He'll sit down after not having played for six months and play stuff that I couldn't dream of playing in a million years. For years I ripped him off left and right. I was like, "I want to be *that* guy."

DOUBLE-DUTY MAN: STEVEN DROZD BEQUEATHS THE THRONE…MOSTLY

MD: So, have you sold your old house yet?

Steven: It finally sold. We closed two weeks ago. It was a late-'50s/early-'60s ranch-style house that just had this nice sound to it. The rooms all had parquet wood floors.

MD: Kliph explained that it wasn't necessarily always the two of you playing drums together; you might play keys or guitar.

Steven: There were different combinations. "Convinced Of The Hex" features two drumkits. I think I was playing Kliph's C&C kit, which has the big 24" bass drum, and he's playing my little Rogers jazz kit. On other things I'd be playing drums and he'd be on congas, or vice versa, or he'd be playing drums and I'd be on bass. We'd do twenty, thirty minutes of that sometimes, find the best pieces, and build a song around it.

MD: This was a new method of song creation for you.

Steven: Yeah, even when [guitarist] Ronald Jones was in the band and we were a four-piece back in the '90s, I don't think we ever really jammed. One of us would usually come in with most of a song, and we'd work out the arrangement together. This time we were building something from nothing. Wayne would come over—he played bass on a lot of the record—and Kliph would play drums and I would play some kind of skronky guitar thing. Later David Fridmann would sprinkle the magic dust on the crap that I recorded at my house, which wasn't recorded very well. It's completely lo-fi. Some of

it literally was one microphone set up in a room, recording two drumkits and a bass guitar. It's like somebody's going to lose there, but David made it work.

MD: Musically, what were you going for this time out?

Steven: I get sick of the big rock thing. We've definitely done that—and done well with that. I consciously want to do more, for lack of a better word, groove kind of stuff. That's why the two-drumkits thing was so cool to me; instead of the really heavy rock thing, it was more like Can or Faust or that kind of drumming.

In a way it was weird because Kliph had been playing with us for years but had never recorded with us before. He hadn't been with us when we were building things from the ground up. It was also a bit of a struggle at first for me, setting the levels for the recording while he'd be drumming and I'd be playing bass. I've decided that my least favorite job in the whole world is recording another drummer.

After a few sessions it became a lot easier, though. After we completed "Convinced Of The Hex" at Tarbox, I didn't listen to it for about two weeks. When I finally went back to it, I loved it. I was like, "How did we come up with this?" It didn't sound like something we'd do—and it seemed to really be working. Then after doing a few of those jam kinds of songs, we were able to pull back and go, "Okay, we're going to have a couple pop songs on there as well"—not the symphonic pop that we've done, but still more pop-song chord structures. A lot of the songs are modal, to sound like a music dork for a minute. [laughs] And the song "See The Leaves" is our first song in the Phrygian mode, which I'm real excited about.

MD: When did you realize this new approach might work?

Steven: When we finished "See The Leaves." That's one of the ones where Wayne started playing this real repetitive troglodyte heavy-metal Sabbath bass line and Kliph got down on drums and just started going crazy. That's when we thought, *This could work.*

MD: So how do you know when something is working and when it isn't?

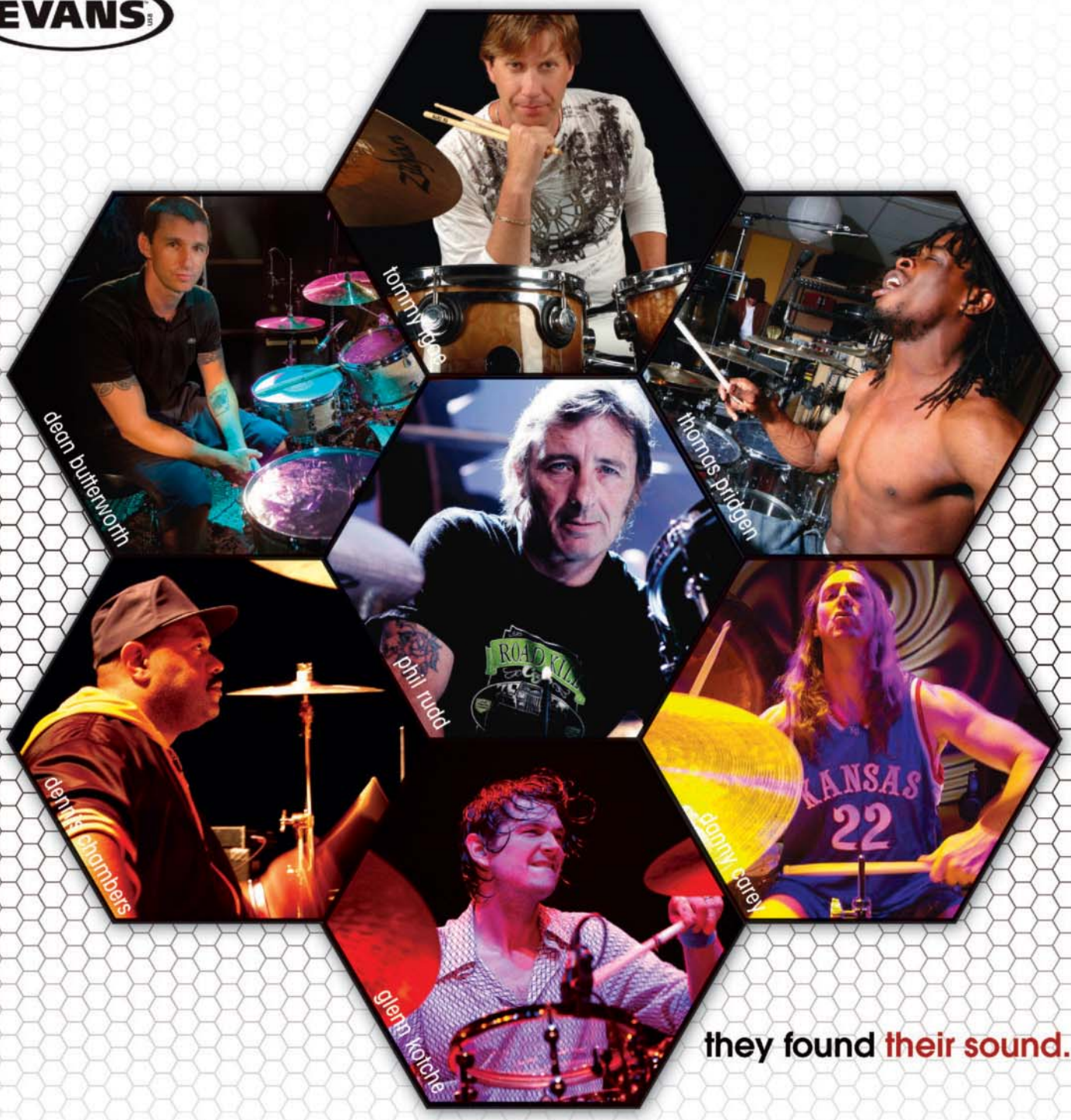
Steven: That is the question, my friend. Who knows? I don't think any one of us can claim we really know. I think it either hits you or it doesn't. And sometimes you don't know it at the time. It was the same with "Convinced Of The Hex." When we were working I was like, "Yeah, this is pretty cool, whatever, let's keep moving forward." Then you hear it a couple weeks later and you really like it. Rarely do you ever get to exist in that moment of: *What I'm doing is great.* In the moment you just go with it if it feels right or moves you in any way. There *have* been songs in our past that when we were doing them I knew they were something special. I remember working on "Superman" in 1997 and thinking, *This is going to be something.*

I will say that this is the first record I can think of where we threw away so much stuff that just didn't work out. Back in the old days we'd just keep pummeling it or keep trying to shape it until it turned into something we liked.

MD: With Kliph in the fold, do you miss playing the drums as much as you used to?

Steven: Kliph played more than I did on the new record. I do miss it. There's

EVANS



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some visceral physical thing that I don't get from guitar, bass, keyboards, or whatever. I guess since it's my first instrument it's always going to be my most natural. Even though I haven't played in months, it's pretty comfortable to sit down and start playing. I can't sit down and start playing Neil Peart drum fills, but I can play a beat that feels good to me. I can do that for hours.

MD: With Kliph in the band, do you find you have to tell yourself not to play the father figure and just let him do his thing?

Steven: He's got a tough gig. Between Wayne and me, it's like he never gets a moment's peace. Wayne is as interested in the drums as anybody else is.

MD: What would the conversations be like?

Steven: If he does a fill I don't like, I just give him a dirty look and he knows. It was demanding on Kliph at Dave's studio. In that environment, if you don't have a part, you're out of there. If he doesn't have a part, then I'll play something. If I can't come up with something, Dave's like, "I'll try something," or we'll just get a drum machine out. That was a real eye-opener for Kliph.

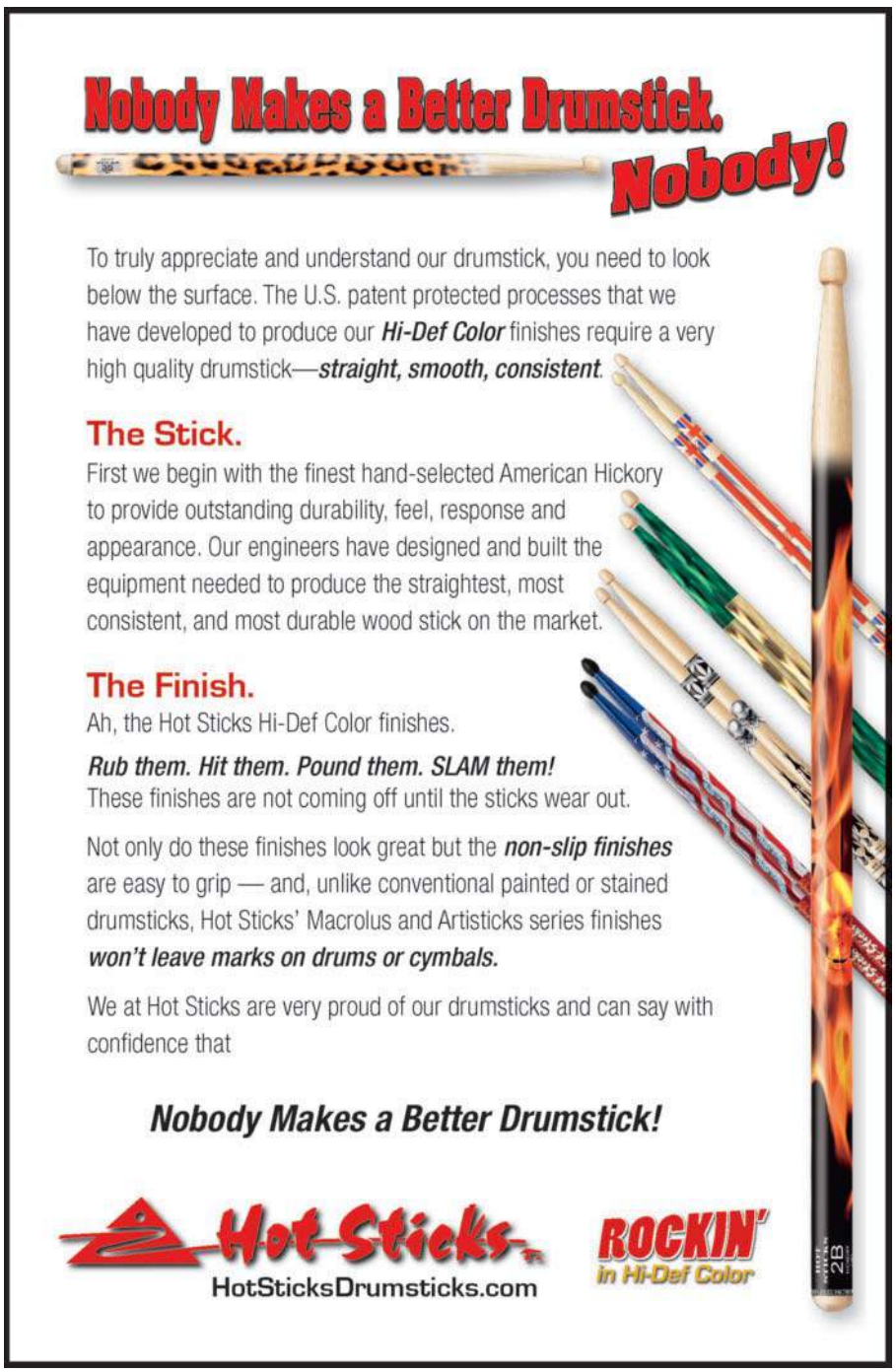
MD: You mentioned not falling back into that big drum sound and being interested in smaller, drier, closer sounds.

Steven: On our last record, *At War With The Mystics*, there are a few tracks that have some great drum sounds, like "Free Radicals." That, to me, is the ultimate in super hi-fi, closed-miked, tight, funky drums. I felt we really got something on that one. "The W.A.N.D." is the same way—just a tight, small kit with a real funky drumbeat.

We'd always talked about wanting to get to a point where we would ditch the chord progression stuff and go modal, like Miles Davis did in the late '60s with *Bitches Brew* and stuff. Just a constant cool beat. So we used that as a jumping-off point for this album. There are a couple songs on the record that almost sound like a Miles Davis ensemble. I don't mean to suggest I'm against that big rock thing. I just think for the trip we were on, that wouldn't have worked. There are a couple songs that are heavier that Kliph plays on, but it's still not that super-badass kick drum. Everything is contained in a midrangy kind of space. There's one Miles Davis song in particular we listened to over and over again, "Sivad," which is on *Live-Evil*. Check it out; you can see where our heads were at, trying to get the groove idea.

Miles is such an inspiration. When we were working on *Zaireeka* and *The Soft Bulletin* we were listening to a lot of *Sketches Of Spain* because of the dense chord structures. We were definitely trying to get that element. It's funny to think that here we are ten years later, trying to copy *Bitches Brew* and *Live-Evil* and *On The Corner* and all that stuff. That's ten years later in his career and ten years later in ours.

Go to ***moderndrummer.com*** *to read Drozd's thoughts on songwriting.*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KUDU's Deantoni PARKS

Once known as a drum 'n' bass pioneer, the rhythmic phenom is harder than ever to pigeonhole. But for sheer bluster, attitude, and uniqueness on the kit, look no further.

If Deantoni Parks didn't exist, some mad scientist in a drummers' lab would want to—no, *need* to—create him. After all, the world of drumming requires feisty radicals to come along from time to time and push the art form forward. "Dr. Drumenstein" would not have an easy time constructing his monster, though. He would have to locate exceptional ingredients: amazing hands capable of grooving and rocking immeasurably hard, feet that produce the thickest pocket but that can also fly, and a brain that's able to process an organic drumming approach while simultaneously applying the angular precision of modern programming and drum 'n' bass. Sound scary? Well, frankly, it is. But fear not. Thankfully, Deantoni Parks is alive and well, ready to shake the unsuspecting out of their doldrums. "That's been my problem for a while," the drummer says. "Playing stuff that's just a little bit ahead of people getting it."

The Brooklyn-based thirty-two-year-old has even come up with a sort of moniker for his aesthetic—now wave—and he's amassed an eclectic résumé. In his main project, the synth-rock trio KUDU, "D" (as Parks is called) mixes improvisational, primal funk pounding and raw dance rhythms beneath keyboard sequencing, droning bass lines, and angelic vocals. Steering clear of the usual kick/hat house grooves, the drummer explores the history of urban beat science, whether it's mid-'80s "B-boy" hip-hop or the frenetic, seemingly inhuman, razor-like approach of the jungle and IDM (intelligent dance music) worlds.

Parks has also lent his talents to records and tours with funk diva Meshell Ndegeocello, the Velvet Underground's John Cale, soul singer Cody Chesnutt, and psychedelic rockers the Mars Volta. "Your content is your wealth," D says. "And I've been fortunate that people have hired me for my own sound." He hasn't forgotten his drum 'n' bass roots, collaborating with sax player Scott Bruzenak in Astroid Power-Up!, a demanding, blips-and-beeps math-nerd freak-out featuring some of the most incredibly fast, difficult, and head-scratching drumming you'll ever hear. (Yes, it really is a live drummer playing it.) And as if that weren't enough, Parks helped write music for and acted in Mark Ruffalo's directorial debut, *Sympathy For Delicious*, and he's currently working on a commercial marketing campaign merging the philosophies of music and sports.

MD sat down with D at his Brooklyn apartment, while Prince's 1986 film, *Under The Cherry Moon*, played on his laptop.

Story by Ilya Stemkovsky • Photos by Paul La Raia

MD: Drum 'n' bass is a style that modern bands and drummers need to know, like swinging or playing funk. You were one of its first practitioners. Was jungle/drum 'n' bass supposed to be the new bebop?
Deantoni: It is bebop. Growing up in Georgia, I was hearing James Brown before a lot of people, and he played funk so fast. I thought that was the way funk was played. Hearing some jungle artists, like Roni Size, it was sort of a take on that—super-fast funk. But the thing about drum 'n' bass is that's it's an art form based in editing. You have to think like a producer or an engineer, not a drummer. You say, "I'm going to fade out this hi-hat and snare together in groups of six"—that kind of thing. That's where a lot of guys who try drum 'n' bass get it wrong. They think it's just a funk beat sped up.
MD: How did you get into that style?
Deantoni: My father had great musical taste—I was listening to gospel, the Gap Band, and Earth, Wind & Fire. I was playing Rufus stuff at three years old. Plus he would slip in all the late-'70s/early-'80s drum machine stuff, which is why my stuff sounds like it does. Just that time period…
MD: Any tracks from then that made a big impression?
Deantoni: "Billie Jean." It was big for everybody, but I was playing drums already, and I was feeling Ndugu [Chancler]. I thought, *The drumbeat is just 2 and 4, but I'll do my own thing, play all around the groove.* So skip ahead to high school, and I was kind of lost as to what to do, trying to find an identity. I formed my own band, and we started doing improvisations and what's now called drum 'n' bass, but we didn't know what it was. So then I started to get back into the electronic stuff from my childhood—things like Kraftwerk's *Trans-Europe Express* and Afrika Bambaataa's *Planet Rock* were huge for me. That's what I wanted my sound to be. Everyone was so big into the fusion thing, playing tons of notes, and I could do all that, but I wanted to be different.

When I was at Berklee, I heard this Metalheadz compilation that had Orbital, Hidden Agenda, and all these amazing electronic artists. The beats would be half time and then suddenly double time, but the music would still be half time. That push and pull inspired me. And the drum patterns were difficult to play. It was hard to make these simple patterns sound like you pushed a button. I wanted people to think, *That machine is killing it,* and then look over and see it was a dude. So before I knew of Jojo Mayer and these other guys attacking the electronic stuff, that was my identity all through college. At Berklee, I was on such a mission to find this collective. I met [keyboardist] Nick Kasper and [vocalist] Sylvia Gordon, and we formed KUDU, which started off playing Photek covers and such.
MD: Your style—the robotic subdivisions, the electronic aesthetic—almost sounds like machines breaking down. Is it important for you to be able to re-create these kinds of beats live?
Deantoni: This is why I love KUDU. It's

hard to find musicians who are willing to take risks and do something that's never been done before. They're as progressive as I am. It's important for me to be able to play on the drums what I program. I can't fully get into what Kanye West and Timbaland do, because there's so much quantizing going on. I'm always getting persuaded to be more "in." But I feel like I'm the mainstream and those guys are "out." Pop is really the hardest thing.

MD: Your drumming often comments on the time, without playing the overt timekeeping role. There's a definite pulse, but it sounds like you're bored with traditional roles and are itching to push rhythm forward.

Deantoni: I like to push the boundaries. There's a history there, and I'm aware of it, but I want to stand out. There are a lot of voids to be filled rhythmically, but I also want to make it accessible. It's 2010. I have a different expectation of where we should be, especially in the States.

MD: Have all the rhythms been played? Is it possible to subdivide barlines any more than they have been? What's next? Can we play faster?

Deantoni: I don't think it's so much about playing faster, but certain rhythms haven't been played on the drumset, which is still a young instrument. I think there's a future in imitating drum machines—learning from them, but being human. Just taking that to another level. And that's not drum 'n' bass. It's a new timekeeping. When I hear drummers whose timing is so on point, it scares me. I *want* to be frightened. Also, I'm talking about drumming innovators getting with companies that are willing to design new equipment. They haven't caught up to where we are. We need acoustic instruments that sound electronic.

MD: You incorporate a lot of tom work into your funk beats. Drummers could utilize more of the kit, but the less-is-more concept has been so drilled into them that they stick to kick/snare/hats for most grooves.

Deantoni: Yeah, it's like having a tom loop while the beat is going. The toms are like the melody. I did a lot of marching band in high school; there would be five different bass drums, and they would play a melody. It's more layering, but they're not necessarily fills—they're a part of the beat. I don't like passive beats. KUDU uses our track "Mid-Show Set" in the middle of the show to break up all our song-structured stuff, to give the fans a chance to scream. That one hits you in the face.

MD: A drummer put up a YouTube clip called "Shedding Some D. Parks Licks." What do you think of young musicians going through a phase where they copy your stuff, like they do with Steve Gadd or Tony Williams?

Deantoni: I'm completely honored by that. Again, I just want to stand out. In the timeline of drummers, I'm coming in at a bad time—after Vinnie [Colaiuta], after the best guys ever. I'm trying to play rhythms you haven't heard before. More as conceptual art instead of how fast you can play with your hands. That's the future. Knowing there's a guy out there playing my licks means I'm on the right path. What he was playing, it really is my stuff, and as I watched, I thought, *It IS different*. That's the biggest thing—that my stuff is relevant to people maybe half my age.

MD: Was John Cale your first big gig?

Deantoni: Meshell Ndegeocello recommended me to him, after KUDU opened for her. I was into the whole [Andy] Warhol/[Jean-Michel] Basquiat scene, so to be a part of that was cool. This was about 2003. I had a call with John, and he was asking if I knew how to run Reason and all this software. At the time, I had no clue! But I told him I did, because you don't say no to this opportunity. They sent me the music, and I had to learn how to use Ableton Live and all that stuff. I was running the computer, so I was in control of starting songs. It was pressure—we were doing

DEANTONI'S SETUP

DRUMS: Ludwig
A. 5x14 **Slingerland** snare
B. 9x13 tom
C. 16x16 floor tom
D. 14x22 bass drum

CYMBALS: Paiste
1. 13" Dark Energy hi-hats
2. 16" Dark Energy crash (not shown)
3. 20" Dark Energy ride (not shown)

HEADS: Remo coated Ambassador batters, clear Ambassador bottoms, Powerstroke 3 on bass drum

HARDWARE: Gibraltar, Ludwig Speed King bass drum pedal

STICKS: Vic Firth American Custom 5B wood tip

RECORDINGS

KUDU Death Of The Party, KUDU /// **John Cale** Circus Live /// **Meshell Ndegeocello** The World Has Made Me The Man Of My Dreams /// **Omar Rodriguez-Lopez** Old Money /// **Astroid Power-Up!** Google Plex

FAVORITES

Afrika Bambaataa & The Soulsonic Force "Planet Rock" from *Planet Rock* (Arthur Baker) /// **Jimi Hendrix Experience** "Little Wing" from *Axis: Bold As Love* (Mitch Mitchell) /// **The Beatles** "Ticket To Ride" from *Help!* (Ringo Starr) /// **Jimi Hendrix Experience** "Fire" from *Are You Experienced* (Mitch Mitchell) /// **Phil Collins** "In The Air Tonight" from *Face Value* (Phil Collins) /// **Michael Jackson** "Billie Jean" from *Thriller* (Ndugu Chancler) /// **Bohannon** "Let's Start The Dance" from *Summertime Groove* (Hamilton Bohannon) /// **Prince And The Revolution** "Take Me With U" and "Darling Nikki" from *Purple Rain* (Bobby Z, Prince) /// **Billy Cobham/George Duke Band** "Juicy" from *Live: On Tour In Europe* (Billy Cobham)

Shepherd's Bush Empire and *Jools Holland*. But getting to play songs like "Venus In Furs" and all that classic Velvets material was great. He was the first person I worked with who I was in awe of every night. He was a huge mentor.

As for Basquiat, there were some recordings of [the painter's art/noise band] Gray from 1979. They saw me in a club and invited me to play on a dismantled kit all spread out on the floor. Gray are not musicians, they're artists. You have to be a chameleon. That's why you have to study so much: You never know what will be asked of you. I couldn't just use a normal kit.

MD: Let's talk about Meshell Ndegeocello. She's used Gene Lake, Sean Rickman, Chris Dave, you—she seems to have good taste in drummers. And what's it like playing with two bassists live?

Deantoni: Meshell is a longtime supporter. I have a great chemistry with her, a real relationship. I have both bassists in my monitor—maybe a little more Meshell. She's one of the best bassists, because obviously she doesn't use that many notes, but the ones she uses—you feel them a little deeper. It's her technique but also the way she plays around time. It allows me to be "on the grid." With Chris Dave, who's one of the more progressive drummers playing with time and rhythm, they would both play "off the grid," which was a cool thing they had. [laughs] They stretched out. I'm a "grid" player—it comes from listening to programmed drums. So I'm always going for that accuracy, but I can flip your head too. I still tour with her.

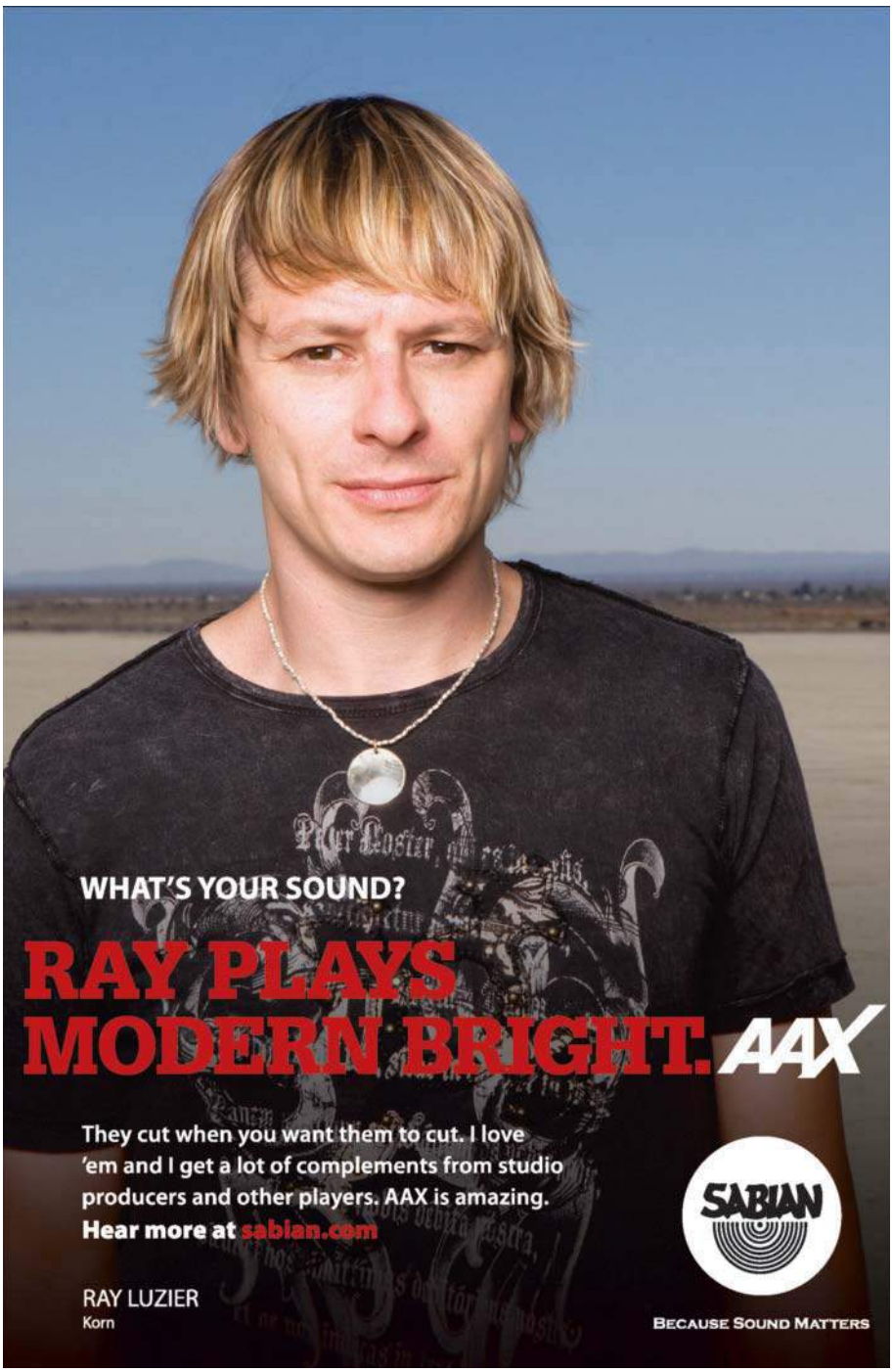
MD: The track "The Sloganeer: Paradise," from Ndegeocello's 2007 album, *The World Has Made Me The Man Of My Dreams*, has aggressive 32nd-note hi-hat and snare work. One of your go-to licks?

Deantoni: That comes from listening to early electronic music. Also, in the South, there's something called the "Miami bass" sound, which didn't happen up north or in Europe. It comes from a marching snare thing, 32nd-note subdivisions. It was popular down there—2 Live Crew were big into it. I like to bring that in weird places.

MD: Describe your experience with the Mars Volta.

Deantoni: Meshell also recommended me there. I met Omar [Rodriguez-Lopez, Mars Volta guitarist], and we clicked. They fired their drummer mid-tour in 2006, and I had to learn all this material, which, you know, is insane and long. They didn't have charts! I had about four days, but I was used to playing in any situation. The first few gigs were a lot of jamming, but eventually I learned more songs. I felt like we were a good match, that they needed a drummer who didn't play so much. There were so many guys in the band, different time signatures, clicks coming in and out. I tried to give them structure by playing that hard pocket but also give them the exciting Billy Cobham shit. In an arena, you have to simplify, so I tried to do that. I wasn't able to continue with them because of KUDU and prior obligations, but they still call for movie soundtrack stuff, and we're all friends.

MD: Astroid Power-Up! is just manic.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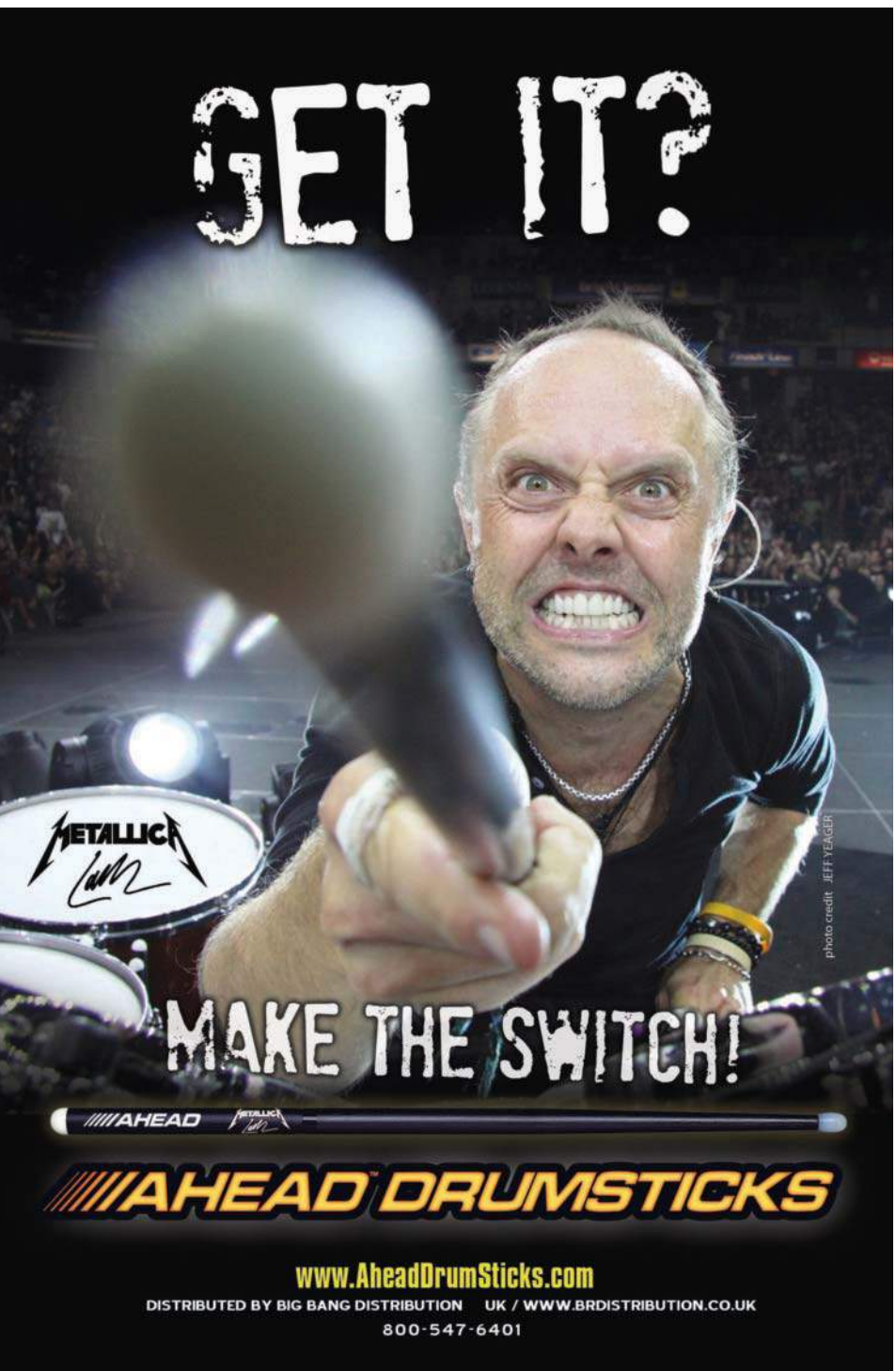
Are any of the beats programmed?
Deantoni: No, nothing programmed, nothing sped up.
MD: Do you work on your chops? Have you worked out of books? Your start/stop style and hand speed are pretty impressive on Astroid's 2003 album, *Google Plex*.
Deantoni: I just put so much time in before I was conscious. I've spent over 10,000 hours just sitting in my basement doing rudiments—fast to slow, slow to fast. I never worked out of those books, the Chapin or the Alan Dawson, because I didn't want that influence. I just wanted my own thing. If you have a system, just better that system. I wasn't outlawing any other technique or anything, though. I did simple rudiments—single strokes, double strokes, every kind of paradiddle. Astroid is just Scott Bruzenak, who will lay out the structure for me. He'll say, "Okay, this is in sixty," and we'll go from there. Sometimes I'll hear it for a second and then just jump in. He'll go back and treat some of the drums.
MD: Does this group play live?
Deantoni: No, but we're going to, because no one believes we can actually play it.
MD: Do you use electronics in your live playing?
Deantoni: I used to a lot. Samplers, all that. I would do this one-man show for NBA events, all-star parties. I'd be playing kick, two snares, and an electronic pad. It was almost like a Kenwood Dennard thing, but more evolved. All these Dirty South beats and drum 'n' bass. When I was nine I actually had the first electronic set made by Dynacore. I was looking for that Prince sound, but I didn't realize it came from [synthesizer company] Sequential Circuits. The Dynacore set had a clap sound, but it didn't sound like the Prince claps. [laughs] But I've exhausted all that—I'm back to the acoustic kit and how I can make it sound "now."
MD: What is your music and sports campaign about?
Deantoni: I have a lot of corporate ideas. I started my own agency and have been pushing my Music Is A Sport campaign. I've met with people, like Spike Lee, who have been very supportive. I've always thought of music as a sport. As a kid, you're playing these pedals, and it's very athletic. It's not like rehearsing, it's like training. I've done research like comparing session and arena drummers to athletes to show how close the heart rates are.
MD: Is the goal for this to be in school curriculums?
Deantoni: Totally, it should be a part of music education. But it should also be for companies, to cater more to us musicians like they cater to athletes. We have injuries, we sweat, we need dry-fit clothing. I'm hitting them from an inventory standpoint, like trying to redesign the marching band uniform. It's polyester! These kids are doing parades and football games, and it's very physical. So my agency is an umbrella for all the things I'm doing: the recording, the touring, the acting, and the corporate stuff. I am a philanthropist, and I want to affect the mainstream culture—everybody, not just drummers.



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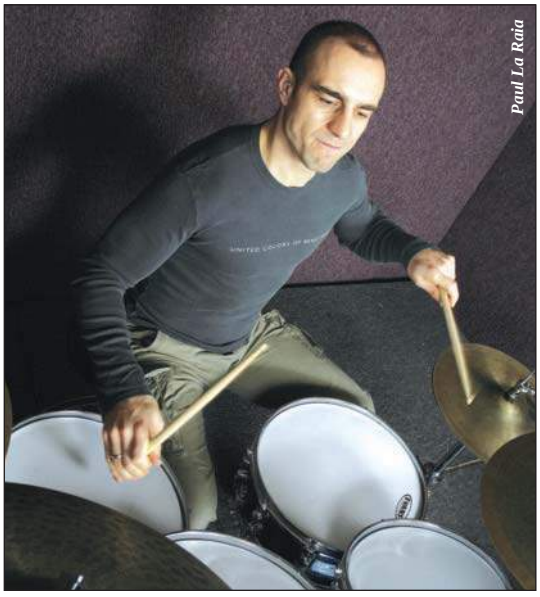
Putting The Music First

5 WAYS TO **MAKE YOUR DRUMMING MORE MEANINGFUL**

by Marko Djordjevic


Paul La Raia

When I meet students for the first time, I ask them to play for me so I can acquaint myself with their abilities and make assessments regarding the course of our studies. All too often, what happens could be summed up as follows: The student thinks for a few seconds, then proceeds to play some beats, fills, and licks, jumping from one idea to the next without connecting them in any logical way. Then he or she usually stops abruptly and looks up at me from the drums, so I can take over the lesson again.

I should add that, quite often, students who come to me already have a good sense of time, a decent drumming vocabulary, and enough facility on the instrument to make clear, articulate statements. But what they're often missing is the ability to put it all together in a cohesive way. It's like a chef in training who has enough quality ingredients to cook a great meal but lacks the recipe and the experience to combine the components into something tasty and nutritious.

My choice of this cooking analogy isn't arbitrary. Just as good food nourishes the body, music should feed the mind and soul of both the performer and the listener. So it is my belief that the foremost obligation of every teacher is to instill in students—from the very beginning—the idea that *music* is what brought them to the drums, and that they will get the most out of the instrument if making music is their focus at all times.

Of course, it's all too easy to tell new students that what they just played seemed disjointed and didn't measure up to the noble concept that every contact with the instrument should result in a statement that moves the player and listener emotionally and intellectually and leaves them feeling inspired and fulfilled. (Even the best musicians in the world have days, rare as they are, when they fail in this pursuit.)

In this day and age, drums are often used to showcase physical ability, sometimes without much regard for musical content. Inexperienced students often notice only the technical skills of very musical drummers (like, say, Terry Bozzio or Gary Husband) and overlook the fact that there is much more depth to these drummers' playing than sheer physical ability. It takes some careful redirecting of a student's attention to get him or her to hear and appreciate the nuances—the subtle and dynamic nature—of our beloved drumset.

Don't get me wrong; I'm not implying that certain styles of playing are inherently more musical than others. I believe good music transcends style, and there's a wide variety of drummers making wonderful contributions to different genres. I'm a big fan of all types of drummers, including Paul Motian, Nicko McBrain, Steve Gadd, Rashied Ali, Stewart Copeland, Trilok Gurtu, Fish Fisher, Bobby Jarzombek, and Ignacio Berroa, among others. I do, however, believe that many drummers today—students and teachers, amateurs and pros—have missed out on the axiom that developing and nurturing musicality should be the most important line on a drummer's to-do list.

To help develop your overall musicality, here are some suggestions.

1. Listen to music as often as you can. But make sure that at least half the time you're listening in a very active way. Music is around us all the time, but if you truly want to get the music *inside* you, you have to dedicate some time each day when you give it your full attention. And make sure you listen to more than just the drums. The most important thing to hear is the way the different instruments relate to one another within the ensemble. Many of us get too caught up in listening for a fresh lick or fill to add to our repertoire. No matter how cool your latest lick is, if you put it in a place where it doesn't belong, it will be a detriment to the music.

2. Be able to play at least one other instrument. My choice is piano, because it helps me understand the harmonic and melodic components that make up most of today's music. Guitar is another great choice, as, again, melodic and harmonic aspects are present. You could also pick up a horn or try bass. Once you learn a little about how to play this other instrument, find a drummer to jam with. This will give you a better understanding of what it's like to play with a drummer and make you more sympathetic to the other musicians playing with you when you're back on drums.

3. Sing and work on ear training. Vocalizing is the link between your musical mind and the body's ability to perform the ideas you come up with. As the old adage goes, if you can't sing it, you can't play it. Don't take this literally, though. It isn't about vocalizing every single nuance to the point of

sounding exactly like the drums. You simply want to be able to accurately vocalize the melodic and rhythmic shape of what you want to play.

Also, the ability to hear harmonic changes (chord progressions) is essential for every drummer, regardless of style. The form of every tune—excluding those involving only a one-chord vamp—contains harmonic transitions. A drummer who can't hear the chord changes in different sections of a tune will have a hard time relating to the rest of the ensemble.

4. Develop ideas. The reason why a lot of drum solos sound haphazard and suffer from a lack of cohesion is the fact that the player isn't relating to the things he or she is playing in a convincing and meaningful manner. The best way to overcome this is to listen to yourself and truly relate to what you're playing. I often practice using call and response to get myself in touch with my own ideas. Start by playing very simple things in two- or four-measure phrases, with the first part of the phrase being the call and the second part being the response. The point is to have a meaningful rhythmic conversation with yourself rather than to simply string together a series of licks.

The call-and-response method can be practiced away from the kit by vocalizing rhythms in two different pitches, one for the call and another for the response. Or you can tap right-hand rhythms on one knee and then respond with left-hand rhythms on the other. Eventually you'll be able to phrase in longer patterns, carrying on conversations consisting of several different ideas. All of this will add a new level of musical complexity to your drumming.

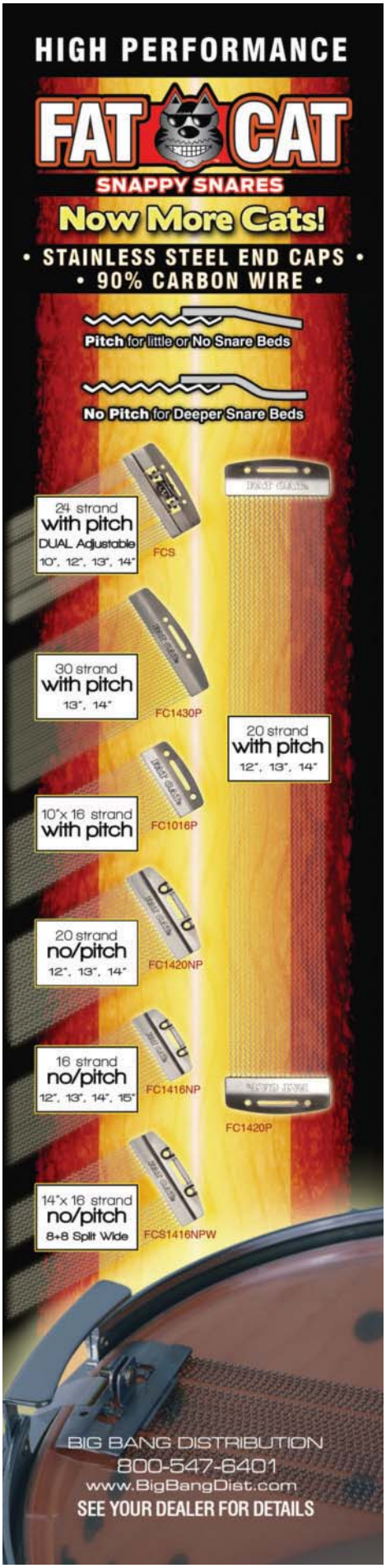
Practicing in this manner is a lot like composing, painting, acting, or dancing. You begin with an idea and then make a move in a different, but related, direction. As you continue to develop new connections to the previous phrase, coherent and convincing statements emerge—all of which still relate to the initial idea. When musicians make statements that are clear, a sense of expectation is created, which is similar to when someone tells a good story. You want your listener to be wondering what will happen next. Even at its most complex and rhythmically dense, drumming can be just as rewarding to experience as a well-written book, a successfully choreographed dance, or a beautifully painted portrait.

5. Play as much as possible (preferably with better musicians than you). I know it's sometimes easier said than done, but if you're serious about becoming a better musician, you have to find a way to play with others. Music schools are the best environments, as everyone is playing and sharing ideas all the time. If you're not in school, do what you can to meet as many musicians as possible and start playing.

In my martial arts experience, I made the most progress by sparring with people who were better and more experienced than I was. Even though I made a lot of mistakes (sometimes very painful ones), the hurt quickly give way to invaluable experience. People who fail to learn from their mistakes are bound to repeat them; people who learn from their mistakes will be much better prepared to avoid making them again. This builds true confidence, without which performing at a high level is practically impossible. If you don't believe in your ability to do something well (in our case, making compelling music), chances are you'll be too busy wondering if you're doing it "right" to give it your best effort.

The challenge is great, and dedication and discipline are a must. But once you commit yourself to making meaningful music on the drums, the pursuit becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Your *desire* to craft artistic statements drives you to do all that you can to progress beyond simply hitting the drums and making noise. Your newly honed musical instincts won't stand for it!

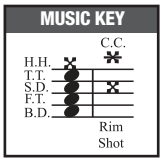
Marko Djordjevic, who was born in Belgrade, Serbia, has performed with Aaron Goldberg, Matt Garrison, Eric Lewis, Jonah Smith, and many others. He is the bandleader of Sveti and is on the faculty at the Collective in New York City. Djordjevic's DVD, *Where I Come From*, is available through Alfred Publishing. For more info, visit myspace.com/svetimarko.



The Sixlet

A MULTI-USE HAND/FOOT PATTERN **FOR ALL DRUMMERS**

by Jim Riley



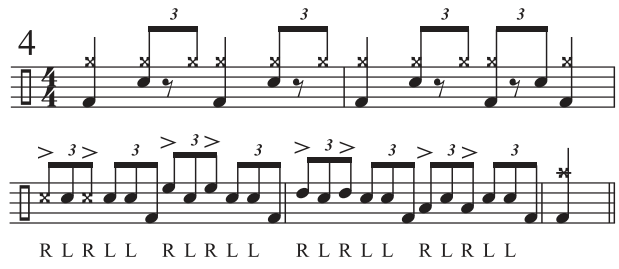
For the past twenty years, I've made my living as a performing musician. But I've recently gotten back into teaching, which has given me the opportunity to break down and analyze certain aspects of my playing so I can pass them on to my students. In doing so, I came across a lick that has proved to be very useful and versatile. I refer to it as a lick because it's not a rudiment, although, as you'll see, I treat it like one. It sounds great, and best of all, it's not very difficult to play.

The pattern is a six-note combination that I call a sixlet. The sticking is as follows: right, left, right, left, left, kick. Play it slowly at first, making sure every note is of the same length.

Once you get comfortable with the sticking, try adding accents on the right-hand notes. Playing the accents as rimshots will help them stand out among the rest of the notes. And if you keep the height of the unaccented notes low, the accents will stand out even more.

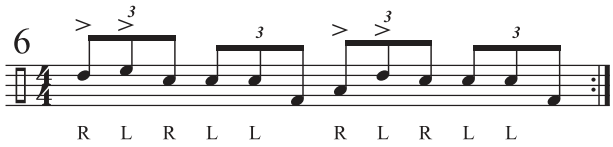
Once you get the accents popping, move the right-hand accents around the kit.

I find the sixlet very useful for fills in swing music, blues shuffles, and half-time Jeff Porcaro "Rosanna"-type shuffles. Here's how I might use the lick in the context of a swing beat.

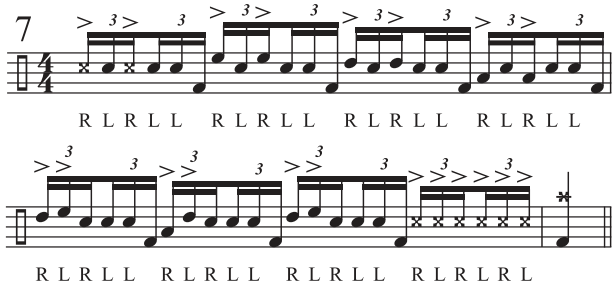


I use this variation—playing the first two notes on the rack toms—a great deal. It's not as powerful as the previous examples, but once you get it going, it has an amazing flow to it.

After you get that working, try moving it to the lower toms.

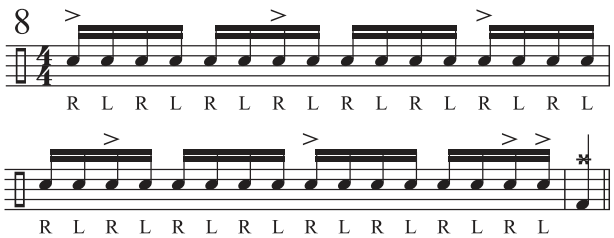


This is an example of how you can blend the two previous variations into one solo break.



Up to this point, we've used the sixlet in the context of 8th-note and 16th-note triplets. But what about straight 16th notes? Well, the six-note pattern doesn't fit perfectly within a measure of 16ths, but that's actually what I like about it. You just have to work out the math in order to get it to resolve back to the 1.

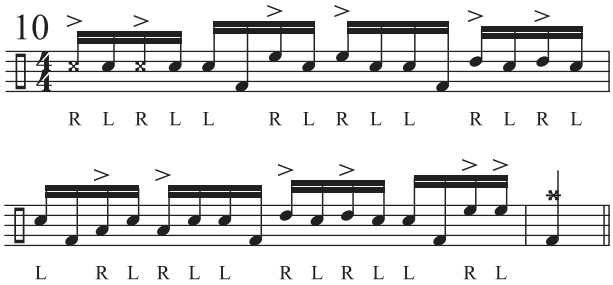
To do that, spread the 16th-note sixlet over two measures. In 4/4 time, there are sixteen 16th notes per measure, which means there are thirty-two 16th notes in two measures. How many groupings of six 16ths can you fit into that space? The answer is five (six times five equals thirty), with two 16ths left over at the end. That means you can play the sixlet five times in two measures, with two 16ths left over at the end. To get a feel for how this is going to work, try playing singles with an accent pattern that outlines our six-note groupings. Break out your metronome or drum machine, and set it to 120 bpm.



If you play just the accents, the phrase will sound like this:

Once you have a handle on where the accents line up within the measure, it's time to return to the sixlet. This example uses the same sticking pattern found in Example 3, but now that we're playing within the context of 16th notes, it will feel quite different.

It can be helpful to alternate between the outline pattern contained in Example 9 and the lick as it plays out in Example 10.



This last example takes the sticking pattern used in Example 6 and applies it in the context of 32nd notes. This may look complicated, but the math we used earlier still applies. With thirty-two 32nd notes in a measure, you can play the six-note pattern five times, with two 32nd notes left over. This is my favorite variation of the bunch.

As you're working on these licks, be sure to take it slow. The basic lick is easy, but digging into these variations—plus ones that you come up with for yourself—will take some time. But that extra practice will pay off, giving you another set of musical tools to inspire your creativity.

Jim Riley is the drummer and bandleader for Rascal Flatts. In addition to performing drum clinics across the U.S. and Canada, Jim can be found teaching at his percussion studio, the Drum Dojo, in Nashville. You can reach him through his Web site, jimrileymusic.com.

Go to the Education page at **moderndrummer.com** to check out a video of Jim demonstrating these exercises.

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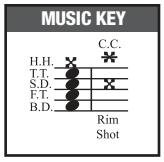
Advanced Funk Drumming In Depth

PART 3: FORGET ABOUT THE BACKBEAT

by Jim Payne

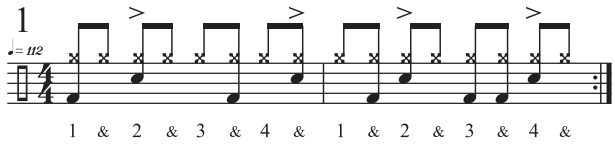


Back when I lived in San Francisco, I roomed with my good friend Jim Strassburg, a great jazz and funk drummer who was playing with Sly Stone and would also get all kinds of other gigs. Sometimes he would come back from a rehearsal with a new band and say, "It's a good gig—nice guys and everything—but I just don't wanna play backbeats all night." This article focuses on some ways to get away from the backbeat, without losing the groove.

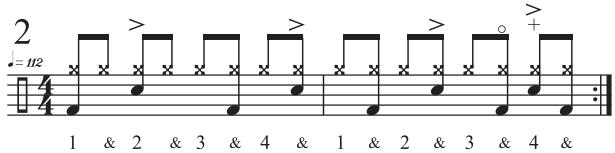
If your band is tight and the bass player is hip, you can try these ideas in some of your funkier tunes. But you've got to size up the band first, to figure out how far you can go. I've had many bandleaders turn around and say, "Hey, man, just play the backbeat." I'd say, "Yessir, no problem," and go back to playing something simpler. But if displacing the backbeat is done in the right context, people will keep on dancin', and these fresh new grooves can help bring the music up to another level.

DISPLACE THE BACKBEAT

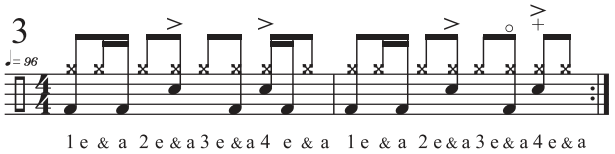
To get the basic idea down, play this fairly simple beat. In the first bar, let the backbeat go by on 4, and play the snare on the "&." Then leave out the bass drum on the 1 of the second bar. This is the concept behind James Brown drummer Clyde Stubblefield's famous "Cold Sweat" beat, which was one of the first grooves I heard that had a displaced backbeat.



To take it one step further, displace the first backbeat in the second bar by playing it on the "&" of 2. In the second measure, I put a hi-hat opening on the "&" of 3 along with the bass drum. Then there's a bass drum note on the "&" of 4 to lead back to the downbeat on 1.



In Example 3, forget about the backbeat on 2 and put it on the "&." Do the same thing in the second measure. This 16th-note bass drum pattern is a little more syncopated. Again, a hi-hat opening along with the bass drum on the "&" of 3 in the second bar helps bring everybody back to 4. For those of you who have studied some Latin drumming, this beat outlines the 3-2 Afro-Cuban son clave in 16th-note form.



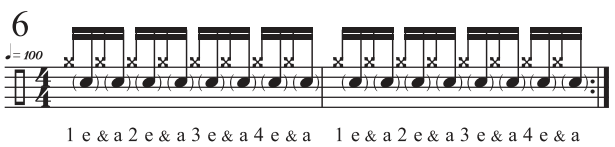
ADD GHOST NOTES

Our next groove contains what Tower Of Power drummer David Garibaldi calls a control stroke, which is a ghost note followed by an accent on the snare. The following exercise will help you develop this concept. The bass drum on the "e" of 2 comes immediately after the accented snare drum on 2.

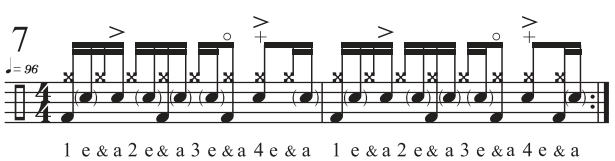
This rhythm has a displaced backbeat on the "&" of 2 in each measure. The control stroke comes on the "a" of 3 in the first measure.

THE FILL-IN STYLE AND ACCENTING THE "A"

The fill-in technique is quite easy, and it can be used to make some very funky beats. Start with this exercise, which involves playing alternating 16th notes with the right hand on the hi-hat and the left hand on the snare. Play the hi-hat and snare at equal volume.

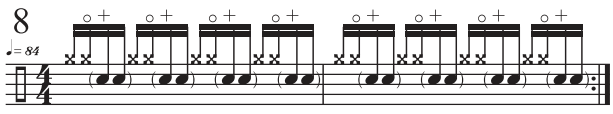


Now accent the "a" of 1. Keep the fill-in concept going, adding a bass drum note along with the hi-hat on the "&" of 2. Then add a hi-hat opening along with the bass drum on the "&" of 3 to lead into 4. The second bar is the same, except for the extra bass drum on the "&" of 4. Again, this beat outlines the 3-2 Afro-Cuban son clave in 16th-note form.



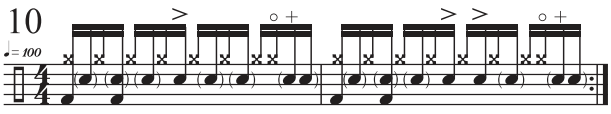
FILL-IN STYLE AND ACCENTING THE "E"

Here's an exercise to develop a hi-hat opening on the "e," followed by two ghost notes on the snare. The hands are playing doubles, and the left foot has to close the hi-hat on the "&."



The following exercise adds accents to the fill-in technique. We'll use these accents for the next groove.

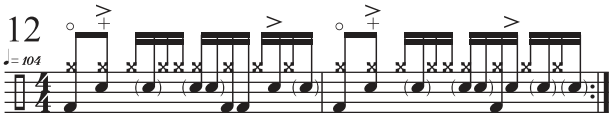
This groove has accents on the "a" of 2 in the first bar and on the "a" of 2 and the "e" of 3 in the second bar. Be sure not to accent the ghost note that's played along with the bass drum on the "a" of 1.



OTHER COMBINATIONS WITH BROKEN HI-HAT PATTERNS

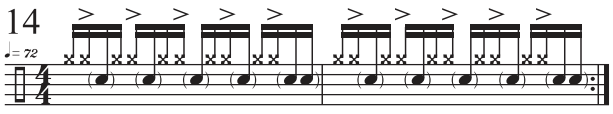
Here's another hand exercise to develop a phrase of three rights on the hi-hat and two ghost notes on the snare. Play all the notes nice and easy, at the same volume. This phrase is used in the next groove.

This beat has displaced backbeats on the "&" of 1 and the "e" of 4 in the first bar and on the "&" of 1 and the "a" of 3 in the second bar.

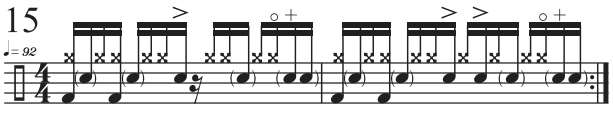


This pattern has some more displaced backbeats, using some of the phrases we've already discussed.

Here's an exercise to help you develop the hands for the next groove. It involves 16th notes grouped in threes followed by one grouping of four. Accent the second stroke of each double on the hi-hat.



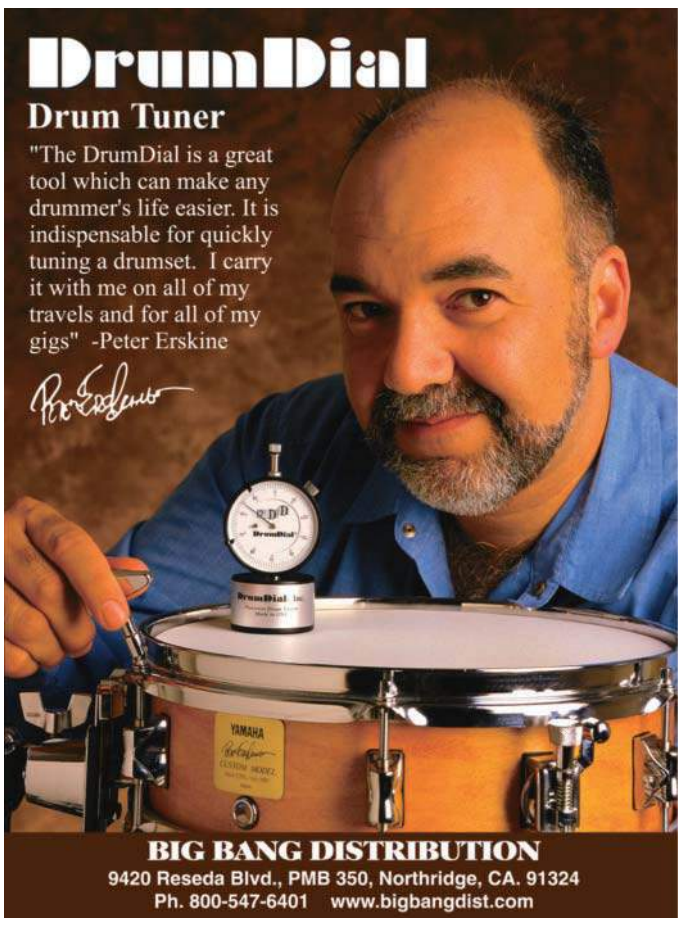
I used this beat on "Jabo" on my CD *Énergie*. It's dedicated to the great Jabo Starks.



With the right band and in the right situation, skipping the backbeat can be a lot of fun, and the groove can be just as tight. Good luck!

Jim Payne has played with Maceo Parker and the J.B. Horns and has produced records for Medeski Martin & Wood. His new book/DVD, *Advanced Funk Drumming*, has recently been released by Modern Drummer Publications. Check out Jim's Web site at funkydrummer.com.

For videos of Jim playing these examples, visit the Education page at **moderndrummer.com**.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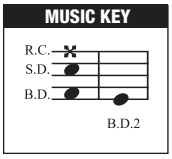
Polyrhythms

PART 5: SUPERIMPOSED HALF-TIME FEELS

by Rod Morgenstein



This month's column focuses on creating the illusion of a superimposed half-time feel by applying three basic patterns to the four-against-three polyrhythm.

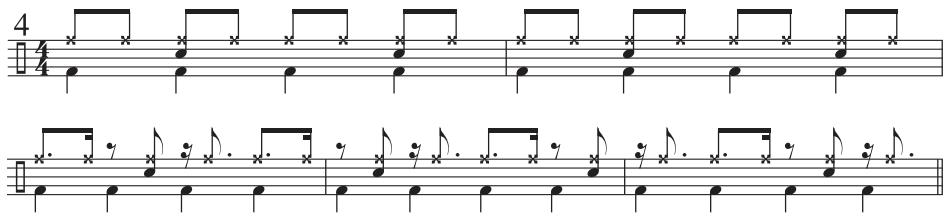
Here are the three patterns we'll be superimposing.

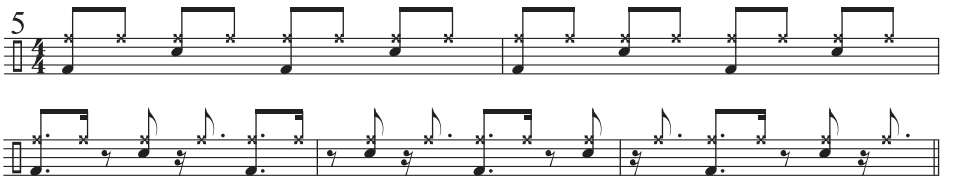
If each 8th note in Pattern A is assigned a dotted-8th-note value, the result is what you see in Example 1. Over the course of the three measures of Example 1, Pattern A will play through twice. Count out loud, "1 e & a, 2 e & a, 3 e & a, 4 e & a," while playing the pattern. Then try to tap your foot on the quarter notes. This counting and tapping process can be extremely beneficial in understanding how the polyrhythm fits within the pulse.

Now add the bass drum on all four quarter notes.

Example 3 applies Pattern B to the four-against-three polyrhythm.

It's important to get comfortable moving back and forth between standard and polyrhythmic grooves. Examples 4 and 5 feature two measures of standard time followed by the superimposed half-time groove.





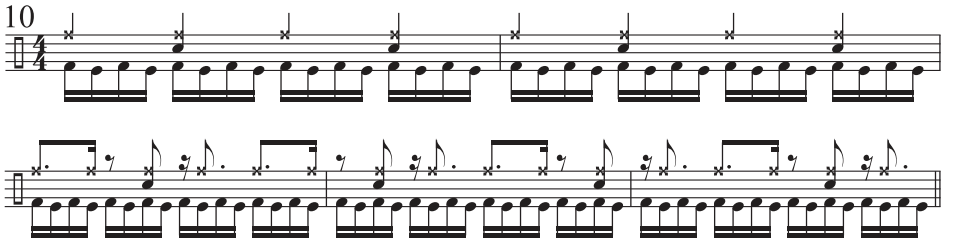
Example 6 combines Examples 2 and 3 back to back.

Example 7 also combines Examples 2 and 3 back to back. But because most music consists of even numbers of measures, it's important to practice these polyrhythmic patterns in two- or four-measure phrases.

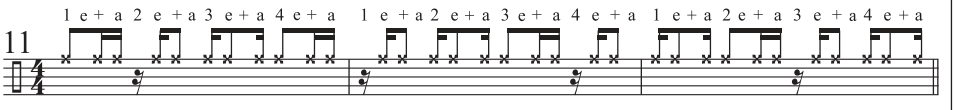
Example 8 applies Pattern C to the four-against-three polyrhythm. The extra note on the bass drum adds a tremendous amount of hipness to the superimposed half-time groove.

Example 9 begins with four measures of a standard groove (Pattern C), followed by its superimposed counterpart.

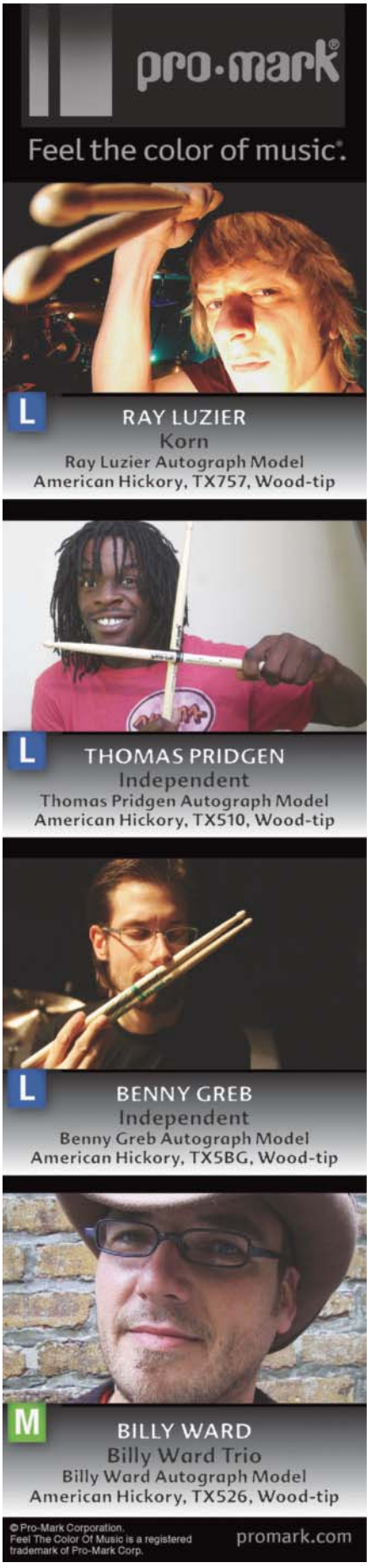
Example 10 features a standard two-measure double bass beat followed by the hands phrasing Pattern A as dotted 8th notes over constant alternating 16th notes with the feet.



Example 11 sets the stage for superimposing shuffles and half-time shuffles in a polyrhythmic context. Be sure to count out loud when practicing this hi-hat pattern. See you next time!



Rod Morgenstein is a founding member of the groundbreaking fusion band Dixie Dregs. He was also a member of the progressive Steve Morse Band, and he continues to play with the pop/metal band Winger. In addition, Rod has performed with the Rudess/Morgenstein Project, Jazz Is Dead, Platypus, and the Jelly Jam. Morgenstein is currently a professor of percussion at Berklee College Of Music.



The Rudiment TAB System

AN EAR-BASED ALTERNATIVE TO STANDARD NOTATION

by Pat Petrillo

Welcome to my series of articles on a new concept for teaching rudimental drumming. This method—which is also discussed in my Hudson Music DVD/book, *Hands, Grooves & Fills*—is designed to help drummers memorize rudiments. It also offers a clear way to string rudiments together into musical combinations that will not only build coordination and endurance but will also develop musicality and phrasing. Just as the Suzuki method teaches violin by training students to first hear the music and then memorize the physical placement of the notes on the instrument, and guitarists use TAB (short for *tablature*) to learn chords, the Rudiment TAB system is designed to teach drummers to memorize rudiments while applying them in musical combinations.

But first, a brief history of how I developed my rudimental skills. When I was about ten years old, I joined a local drum corps in New Jersey. (I later played snare with the famed Bayonne Bridgemen, winning three "high drum" awards under Dennis DeLucia.) I was always taught by rote, mostly playing back rudimental combinations and passages that were demonstrated by the instructor. That's the way it was done back in the day. Nothing was ever written out for us. Many of us couldn't read music—but we could play any rudiment combination that came our way.

As a way of internalizing these phrases and cadences, I occasionally made crib sheets, or symbolic notations, to help me memorize how each phrase began. The system served me very well and helped me tremendously in developing my ear, mainly because we had to memorize complicated sixteen- and thirty-two-bar phrases and put them together with others to form songs.

THE RUDIMENT TAB SYSTEM IS BORN

Through my teaching over the years, I've noticed a few things. Most drumset players don't have all the rudiments memorized. They don't know exactly how long an eleven-stroke roll lasts, or how to play a pataflafla, lesson 25, or ratamacue. Anyway, the hardest thing about learning to play rudimental passages and solos is the *reading* of those solos. Many of my students haven't been exposed to "traditional" notation, but they still want to learn to play hip rudimental phrases, ones that could benefit them in contemporary applications.

Thinking back on my crib sheets, I've created symbolic notations for every rudiment as a methodology for learning rudimental passages. Since implementing this system, I've found that students *memorize* rudiments more quickly because they aren't relying on reading written notation. They began playing passages that previously seemed unachievable, and they see more immediate results. This creates a deeper knowledge of how each rudiment sounds and feels. In my opinion, it's much more important to learn to hear and perform the rudiments than it is to read them.

Reading rudimental solos becomes much easier when you can already perform them technically. But practicing exercises alone will not fully develop your rudimental chops and technique. Combining rudiments into phrases—from memory—is necessary in order to truly raise your level of performance.

HOW IT WORKS

In the TAB system, each rudiment flows into the next, using an 8th-note pulse with no breaks or rests. Although the barlines break the phrase into measures, the first rudiment in each measure may not start on beat 1 but rather on the "&" of 1. This is because many of these passages utilize over-the-bar phrasing. Please refer to the MP3 examples of each exercise, which are available in the digital edition of *Modern Drummer* and at moderndrummer.com, to hear how each example sounds.

Let's start our journey with the paradiddle family.

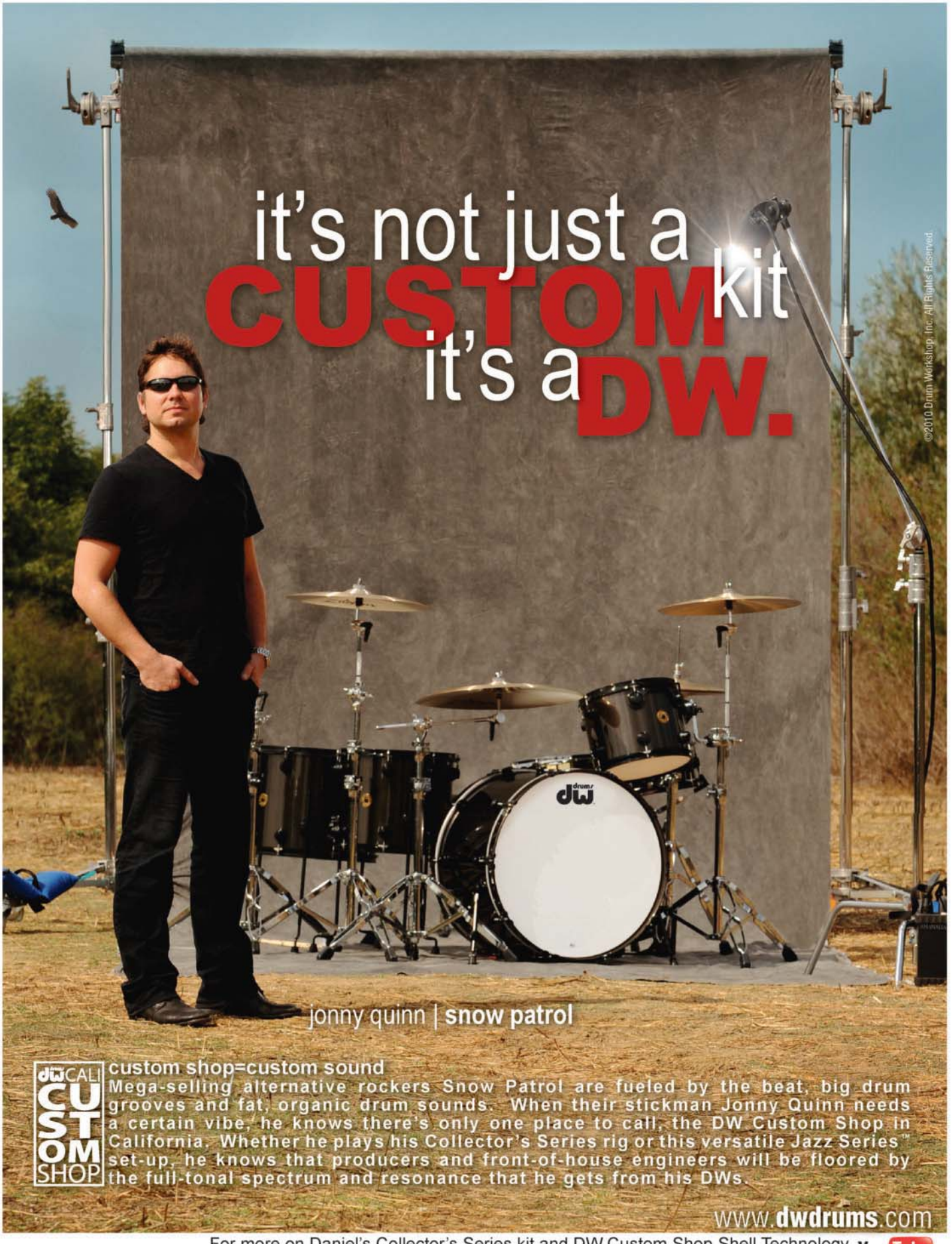
DIDDLE COMBOS

Here's a breakdown of the shorthand we'll be using for the paradiddle, double paradiddle, and paradiddle-diddle.

RUDIMENT	NOTATION	"TAB" SYMBOL
Paradiddle		P,P,
Double Paradiddle		DP,DP,
Paradiddle-Diddle		PDD,PDD,

The following rudimental TAB phrase uses the paradiddle and double paradiddle. Remember to keep the 8th-note pulse steady, with no breaks or rests. This causes the rudiments to move around the beat, often starting on the "&." The built-in alternations will help you develop coordination.

This next phrase emphasizes the paradiddle-diddle, played leading with either hand.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RUDIMENTAL SYMPOSIUM

Here's a syncopated rhythmic combo that works the paradiddle variations in a challenging over-the-bar phrase. Make sure you keep track of your basic pulse for this one.

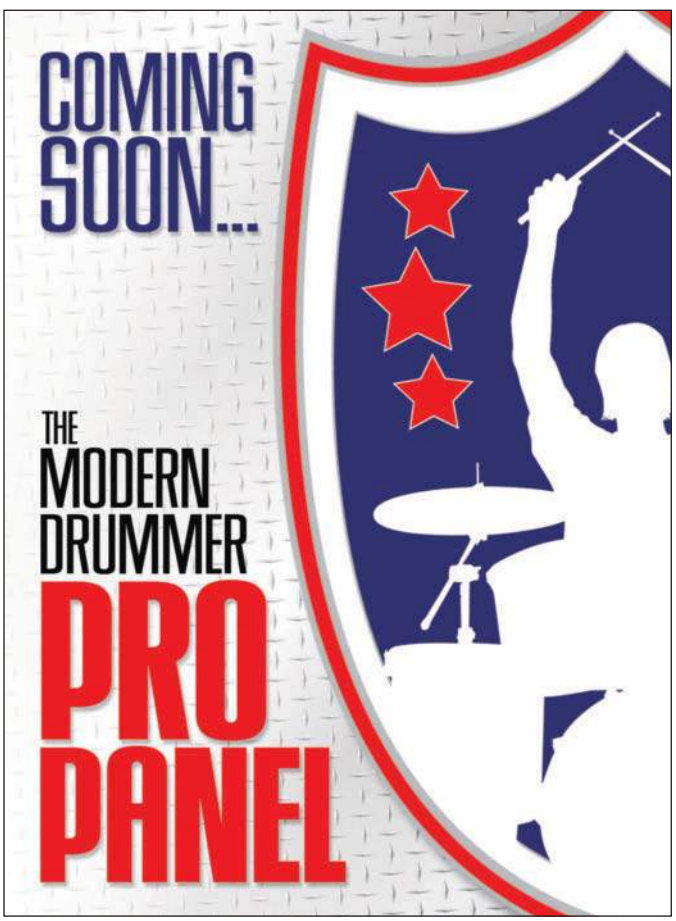
```
  >> >> >   > >    >   >> > > >      > > >
[:DP,DP,P,|P,PDD,P,|DP,P,P,PDD,|P,P,PDD,:]
  RR LL R   L R    R   LL R L R    R L R
```

Now let's put all three paradiddles together into a funky solo that will challenge your coordination by moving the diddles around the beat.

```
  >    >> >>  > > >>  > >   > >    >> >
[:PDD,DP,DP,|P,P,DP,|P,PDD,P,PDD,|DP,PDD,|
  R   RR LL  R L RR  L R   R L    LL R

  > >> > >  >   >> >  >   >> >  > > >
|P,DP,P,P,|PDD,DP,P,|PDD,DP,P,|P,P,PDD,|
  R LL R L  R   RR L  R   RR L  R L R

  >> > >>   > >> > >    > >> >  > >> >
|DP,P,DP,|P,DP,P,PDD,|P,DP,P,|P,DP,P,|
  RR L RR  L RR L R    R LL R  L RR L

  > >   >>  >> > > >  >   >   >  >> > >
|P,PDD,DP,|DP,P,P,P,|PDD,PDD,P,|DP,P,P,:]
  R L   LL  RR L R L  R   R   R  LL R L
```

Next time we'll take a look at rolls.

Pat Petrillo is a full-time faculty member at Drummers Collective in New York City and a popular clinician. He has performed with Gloria Gaynor, Patti LaBelle, and Glen Burtnik and has played numerous Broadway shows. His multimedia instructional package, *Hands, Grooves & Fills*, is available through Hal Leonard/Hudson Music. For more, visit patpetrillo.com.



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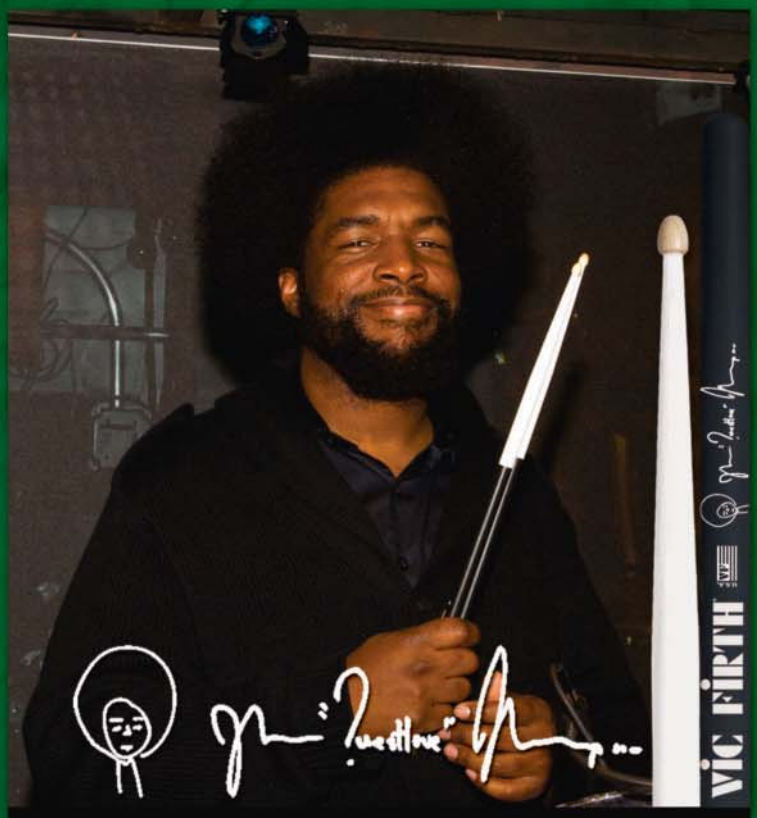

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DARREN KING

MuteMath's duct-taped demon says he gets to live out his devilish fantasies on stage largely because he's learned how to approach life *off* stage.

by Ken Micallef

Courtesy of WB Teleprompt Records

In the studio, MuteMath's Darren King is creative and crafty, often editing found-sound samples and live drumming to create a hybrid rhythm monster. MuteMath's most recent album, *Armistice*, benefits greatly from King's thoughtful recording approach and inspired sticking, which recalls a unique melding of Clyde Stubblefield, a rawer Steve Gadd, and some DJ's itchy trigger finger.

But get King live and loud, whether on tour to promote *Armistice* or on a recent *Letterman* performance, and he's anything but composed. Banging his Rogers kit like a mad commando intent on destroying enemy forces, King lays down massively broken funk beats, blaring single-stroke rolls, distressed Latin patterns, and subtle ambient strokes, frequently capping off MuteMath shows with a manic drum solo that incorporates a Slingerland marching drum, a mic stand, and a Rhodes piano.

Is King heavy mental? His pre-show warm-up exposes the methods to his mayhem. "I do ten push-ups and jump around to get my heart beating," he says while on vacation in Tennessee. "I think about the audience and the songs and about being someone different. I try to be tough, like I'm a bad dude. Because that is what I was made to be on the drums. Drums are not nice, especially if you're in a rock band. I was raised to be nice, but this is when I get to be who I *want* to be. I was made to explode. So before the show I want to light the fuse. I wanna be a bad man."

Taping his headphones to his skull so they don't fly off during his typically galvanic performances, King doesn't yammer on in technique-laden drum speak—he values the mind-body connection over the search for the perfectly displaced 32nd-note metric modulation. He wants to connect with his band, with the audience, with the heart. To that end, he often seeks a quiet space to calm his inner drummer before showtime. "I used to take it for granted," he says. "I went from talking on the phone or hanging out straight to the stage. You can perform that way, but I don't know if you can feel the music as well. It's careless to do that, to treat performing like something you have to do instead of something you were made to do. Now I try hard to not be distracted before the show.

"On *Letterman*," he adds, "I got diverted by a skit they did before we performed. Then suddenly we were on. I didn't have time to get in the right frame of mind, and it affected my performance. In those instances you have one chance. I have to try harder."

Admitting to doing only a few hand stretches before hitting the stage, King is more focused on maintaining band communication. MuteMath is a brotherhood where each member forgives any internal grudges he may be holding before a note is played. "It's important to stay cool with the guys you're in a band with," King says. "When you're touring, the challenge is to make sure you find time alone. But you have to make sure you get together sometimes and be friends. If you let it slip, then something will happen emotionally, and that will affect your performance and you won't play as well together. And at the same time you have to get good at leaving all the personal stuff off the stage. That kind of stuff affects your performance."

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Befitting his organic outlook, King doesn't play or endorse a brand-spanking-new set of drums. He prefers his '60s-era four-piece **Rogers** kit and battered collection of **Sabian**, **Zildjian**, and **Paiste** cymbals.

On stage, the drummer's headphone mix is a basic stereo pan of the band and a click—a constant for most of his tenure with MuteMath. "Prior to this tour we would play entire shows to a click," King says. "Hence the headphones. In that way we were able to play together without looking at each other. We could attack the crowd like one force. But we're just now starting to play songs where even if there is a click there's no sequence running with it. Or there will be no click at all. Then we feel out the energy of the room and stay at one part of a song for as long as we like. That has become the most magical and electric part of the show. We're getting more freedom in the set."

A sense of freedom also permeates King's performances on *Armistice*, including the three-stick approach of "Clipping" (with two sticks in his right hand to simultaneously strike the hi-hat and snare drum rim), the mangled computer edits and live drumming of "Pins And Needles," and the totally live tracking of "Backfire" and "Electrify."

"Drums are not nice, especially if you're in a rock band. I was raised to be nice, but this is when I get to be who I *want* to be."

Not every drummer would take comfortably to King's anything-goes philosophy. "I was blessed with ignorance when I was younger," Darren says. "I didn't have the pressure of impressing anyone with my vocation. I felt accepted, and that made me free to do something I got excited about. That was important. It might seem selfish to concern yourself with what you really want. But it's actually a generous, brave, and scary thing to do something you love. Protecting your motive is important. We call it playing drums, and other things are work. Preserve the idea that you are *playing* the drums." •

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TOCA PERCUSSION

MARK SHERMAN QUARTET'S TIM HORNER

Leader of sidemen? The **first-call New York swinger** has supported big bands, singers, and everything in between.

by Ilya Stemkovsky

There isn't an empty seat at the swanky midtown New York City jazz club the Kitano as Tim Horner takes the stage with vibes player Mark Sherman's quartet. In a town with infinite choices for live jazz, it's clear why this group has attracted an audience—it has a sound developed from years of gigging, thanks largely to Horner's impeccable swing and deep rhythmic vocabulary. "I think people hire me because I've learned how to play with vocalists," the drummer says. "With a singer, you have to play with a certain sensitivity. But you also need to burn. This is hard to do, but learning to cook at low volumes also helps when you go into an awful room with terrible acoustics."

Horner studied at Berklee in the '70s with fellow alums Steve Smith and Vinnie Colaiuta. He got his first major gig with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, an experience that comes in handy today during regular subbing stints with the Village Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. "I can apply my big-band skills there," Horner says. "But there are so many soloists that the essence is really a great small band as created by Thad [Jones] and Mel [Lewis]. This is similar to what I did with Maria Schneider's band for eleven years."

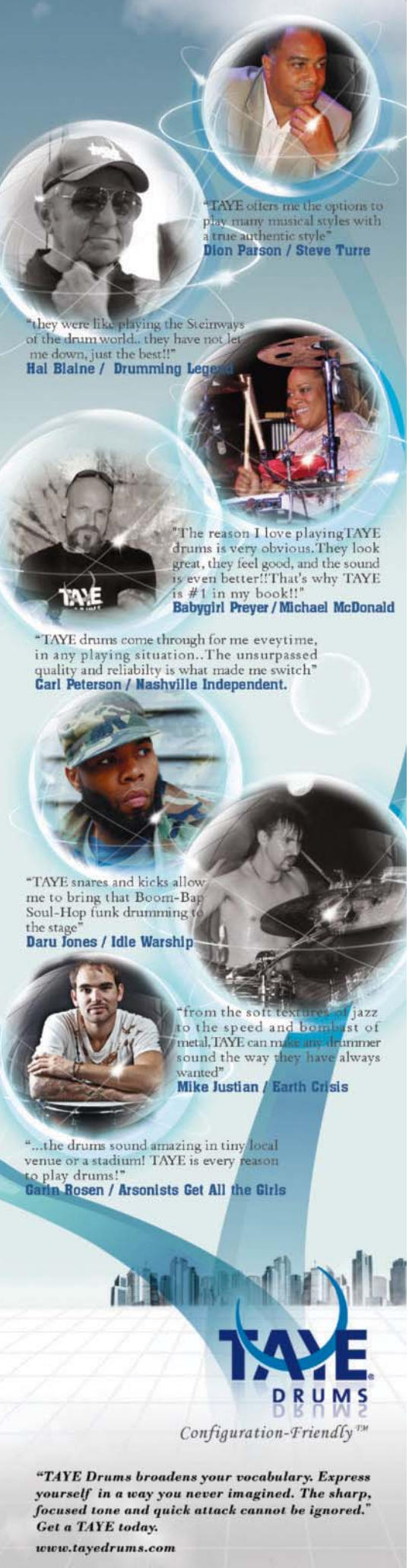
With Sherman's intricately arranged originals and choice standards, Horner delves into his toolbox for 8th-note pulse rhythms, beautiful brush playing, and odd times, all delivered with a grace and fluidity honed over time. "You see it with Bill Stewart, Billy Hart, Al Foster—so many cats that I love," Horner says. "There's always circles and smoothness. A lot of guys today play odd meters great, but some of them don't swing too hard. Maybe they give up one for the other. The music is evolving, though. We're not going to swing like we did forty years ago—that time is gone. But artists like Maria Schneider are geniuses at composing odd-time melodies that are so 'felt' that it's natural. I want to carry that spirit into soloing and crossing the barline."

Horner, who teaches at New Jersey City University, represented the U.S. State Department in 2004 as a member of the Jazz Ambassadors, traveling through Eastern Europe and South America with the Roseanna Vitro Quartet as a cultural exchange. "The audiences were great," he says. "They want to know the music. They want to know Americans. Unfortunately, they're also interested heavily in pop culture. They're not as into jazz as they used to be. But a lot of young musicians do want to play the music. There's just not a young audience for it. And this isn't just for music, it's for arts in general."

On the horizon for Horner is a new "little big band" with trumpeter Ron Horton, gigs with saxophonist James Moody and vocalist Karrin Allyson, and the first album of his own compositions. "I want to write it and arrange it—be involved in all aspects," the drummer says. "I don't want to be a sideman on my own record. But I'm fortunate that the leaders I work with are busy, so I've had a good year even in this economy. Maybe one day I'll lead my own group, but for now I have no complaints."

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Horner plays a '70s-era **Pearl** drumset, **Istanbul** cymbals, and a brass **Ludwig** snare.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WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT...?

BOBBY RAMIREZ

Edgar Winter's drummer got to play on only a few albums in the early '70s before he was killed in a bar fight. But his drumming on those classic recordings has left a profound mark on those who've heard them.

by Cleve Warren

Bobby Ramirez is a name that not many contemporary drummers recognize. But if you were playing in the early 1970s, you very well might remember him as an enormous talent whose life was cut short by a senseless and brutal act.

Ramirez was born and raised in the tough oil-refinery town of Port Arthur, Texas. He came from a hardworking and hard-loving Mexican-American family who encouraged his prodigious natural ability. His uncle Roy, a local big-band drummer, gave him the only formal instruction he ever had. By the age of eleven, Bobby was playing with sixteen- to nineteen-year-old musicians in local rock bands. At fourteen, he was a professional, playing large clubs just across the state line in Louisiana. He dropped out of high school the summer before his senior year to go on the road with the regional legends the Boogie Kings. The road led to Las Vegas and eventually to gigs with Ike & Tina Turner and Dick Jensen, with whom Ramirez played *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

It was late in 1970 when two of Ramirez's old friends from southeast Texas, Edgar Winter and Jerry LaCroix, put a band together with the best musicians they could find. The first person they hired was Bobby. Upon assembling the rest of the group, which included guitarist Rick Derringer, they formed arguably the best "blue-eyed soul" band of all time—Edgar Winter's White Trash.

Ramirez recorded two brilliant albums with Winter, the studio LP *White Trash* and the live *Roadwork*. Both recordings provide significant evidence of the drummer's gifts. *White Trash* shows incredible discipline, taste, and rock-solid time, in different styles—high-energy rock and funk, slow 6/8 blues ballads, and big band. Check out Ramirez's precise accompaniment of the horn figures on the gospel rave-up "Save The Planet."

Roadwork is a live drumming masterpiece. Among the numerous highlights is Ramirez's amazing single-pedal work on "Turn On Your Love Light." The double album was recorded at two famed New York City theaters, the Apollo and the Fillmore East, and at the Whisky A Go-Go on the Sunset Strip in West Hollywood. The gig at the Whiskey brought out some friends of the band's, including Marty Paich and Joe Porcaro. They in turn brought their kids David Paich and Jeff Porcaro, who were playing with Sonny & Cher at the time. Jeff went crazy over Ramirez's drumming, according to those who were there.

Edgar Winter's White Trash broke up shortly after *Roadwork* was released. The band re-formed around lead singer Jerry LaCroix and put out the album *LaCroix*, which shows where Ramirez was headed in his playing. A huge fan of Buddy Rich, Bernard Purdie, and all the great New Orleans drummers,

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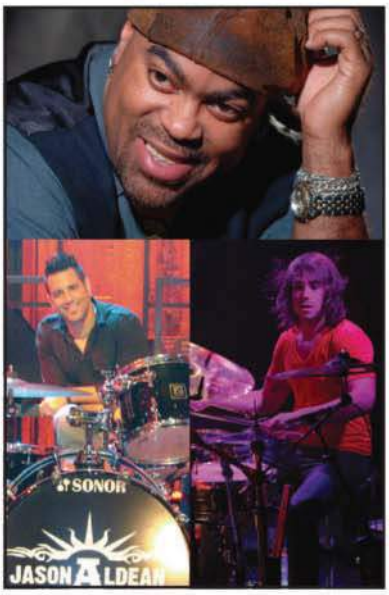

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KNOW THESE TOO...

The 1981 album *Back In Beaumont* features early tracks John Turner recorded with Johnny Winter

"UNCLE" JOHN TURNER

A childhood friend of Johnny Winter's (Edgar's older, six-string-shredding brother), "Uncle" John Turner helped launch the guitarist's career by recruiting bassist Tommy Shannon, playing on Winter's first three proper albums (*The Progressive Blues Experiment*, *Johnny Winter*, and *Second Winter*), and performing with him at Woodstock. In 1970 Turner left Winter's band and moved to Austin, where he and Shannon formed the band Krackerjack, featuring a pre-fame Stevie Ray Vaughan on guitar. Turner went on to play with a number of notable blues artists, including B.B. King and Muddy Waters, and became a beloved member of the Austin music scene, helping nurture the careers of a number of up-and-coming artists. He died in July 2007.

The McCoys, featuring Randy (bottom right) and Rick (top right) Zehringer

RANDY ZEHRINGER

Randy Zehringer came to fame early in life as a member of the teen bubblegum group the McCoys, who had a number-one hit in 1965 with the song "Hang On Sloopy." That group also featured Randy's brother Rick (who later changed his name to the more marquee-worthy Derringer) and Rick's future White Trash bandmate, bassist Randy Jo Hobbs. Though the McCoys were unable to retain popularity as they attempted to move the group in a more mature direction, a stint as the house band at the New York City club Steve Paul's Scene put them in the company of rock's late-'60s aristocracy. Paul became their manager and hooked them up with guitarist Johnny Winter, with whom they recorded the albums *Johnny Winter And* and *Live Johnny Winter And*. (A controversial bootleg of a March 1968 gig at the Scene, officially released in 1994 as the album *Bleeding Heart*, reportedly features Zehringer jamming with Jimi Hendrix, Winter, and Jim Morrison.) Later the drummer came down with a case of encephalitis, an infection that causes swelling of the brain, leaving him acutely sensitive to loud sounds. Accounts differ, but it's generally thought that a combination of the illness's symptoms and the effects of living life in the fast lane led to a number of mental breakdowns. Though his health has improved over the years, Zehringer remains uninvolved in the music world.

Bobby refines his combination of these influences on the recording, creating his own style in the process.

Just as Ramirez seemed on the brink of becoming a drumming household name, fate intervened. On July 24, 1972, LaCroix's band opened a concert for Uriah Heep in Chicago. The group was celebrating a birthday at a Rush Street nightclub, when Ramirez was beaten in the restroom by four thugs who considered his hair too long. The fight spilled out into the club. Ramirez, normally a kind and mild-mannered man, made the mistake of following the action onto the street, where he was attacked in an alley and beaten and kicked to death. The drummer was only twenty-four.

Jon Smith, sax player for White Trash and LaCroix, and later Toto and Boz Scaggs, says, "He just should have walked away—and normally he would have. But he didn't, and the music world is poorer for it."

Among those who loved Ramirez's playing, as well as his kind and gentle nature, is Bobby Grauso, who owned the Fibes Drum Company at the time of Bobby's death. Grauso gave Ramirez an endorsement, on the recommendation of the great drummer/educator Alan Dawson, and he remembers Ramirez as "a hell of a player, with a great feel and unlimited potential."

The drummer's best friend, Jerry LaCroix, says, "If you never saw Bobby play live, you never really heard Bobby." Rick Derringer, who launched a successful solo career after White Trash ended, says, "Bobby had the best groove of any drummer I've ever played with. When I hear the recordings of our rhythm section—Bobby, me, and bassist Randy Jo Hobbs—on Edgar's *Roadwork* album, it blows my mind how tight we are. I miss him even now. He was also a good human being. In the future, I know we'll be grooving together for the Lord in heaven."

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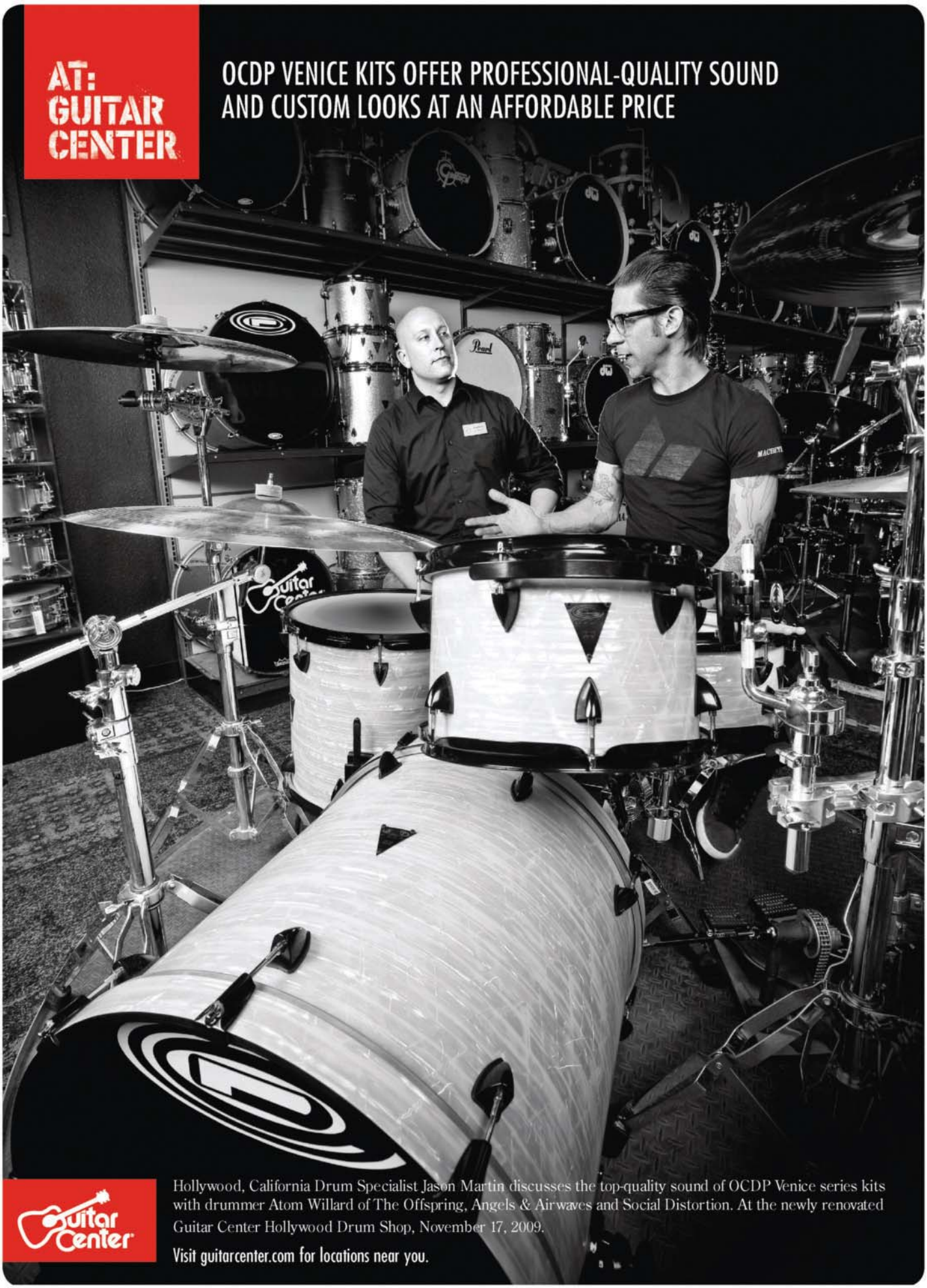

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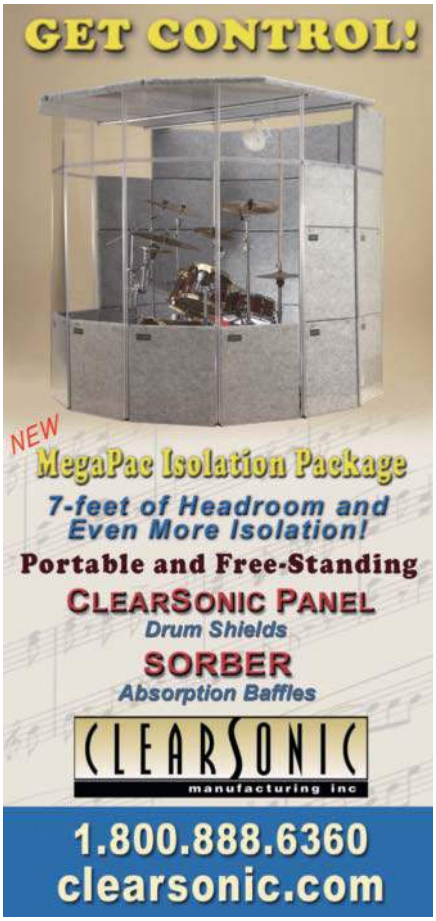
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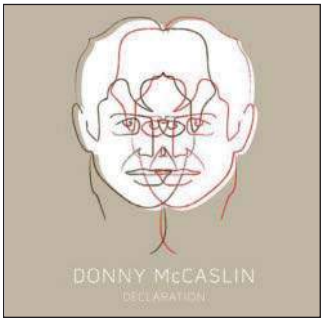

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DONNY McCASLIN DECLARATION

Tenor saxophonist Donny McCaslin's newest is not only a triumph for the leader but also a reaffirmation of **ANTONIO SANCHEZ**'s well-deserved place in the elite circle of today's jazz drumming masters. With each successive recording, Sanchez is given more opportunity to show off his non-Latin skills, and his sweeping, dramatic approach (reminiscent of Brian Blade's playing) is equally fiery and sensitive. When he does lock in on the angular rhythms of "Fat Cat," prodding pianist Edward Simon, interjecting kick accents, and whipping out serious chops, his intuitive accompaniment is simply top notch. Students should prepare to go through their "Sanchez phase." (sunnysiderecords.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

★★★★☆

KING CRIMSON
RED 40TH ANNIVERSARY SERIES

Having trimmed its ranks to a lean-and-mean three-piece by 1974, King Crimson practices progressive power trio restraint on *Red*. The first reissue of the band's 40th Anniversary Series, this double disc features excellent remastering, alternate tracks (including a revelatory "Fallen Angel"), a 5.1 mix, and live renditions of *Red* material from French TV. Performing "Larks' Tongues In Aspic: Part II," "The Night Watch," "Lament," and "Starless," KC appears serious, except for drummer **BILL BRUFORD**. Making mad faces as he pounces on the kit, temple blocks, gongs, and weird metal objects, Bruford executes his typically tight, off-kilter sticking patterns while flowing around the set with inspired glee. (Inner Knot) **Ken Micallef**

★★★☆☆

PAUL WERTICO'S MID-EAST/MID-WEST ALLIANCE IMPRESSIONS OF A CITY

"Once you rehearse, it's not immediate anymore," says drummer Paul Wertico in the liner notes to *Impressions Of A City*, a free-improv date connecting Middle Eastern sonorities with the avant, loud/soft dynamics of Chicago's underground music scene. Wertico keeps the proceedings from going off the rails with subtle, well-placed cymbal strokes and tom accents. But with two screaming guitars and electrified sax, the music can shift into forte *rawk* on a dime. The assaultive drumming of "The Inside Track" is a welcome far cry from Wertico's Metheny days, and it allows the listener to revel in the beauty of the drummer's controlled chaos. (chicagosessions.com) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

TAKING THE REINS

by Ilya Stemkovsky

BEN PEROWSKY, ALVIN QUEEN, TYSHAWN SOREY, CHAD TAYLOR, FRED TAYLOR TRIO

BEN PEROWSKY, a forward-thinking Downtown NYC mainstay for years, returns as a leader with *Esopus Opus*, which features clarinets, accordions, and the drummer's elastic swing and charging grooves, as on the 13/8 trickery of the title track. (Skirl)

ALVIN QUEEN, who's played with Horace Silver and Oscar Peterson, knows something about authentic '60s-style soul drumming *and* jazz. On *Mighty Long Way*, Queen's gritty bop and fun Blakey-esque fills ("Sushi") bridge the schools of old and new. (Justin Time)

Koan, a trio outing emphasizing interesting harmonies and adventurous drumming, is further proof of **TYSHAWN SOREY**'s ever-expanding sonic palette. Deliberate space is a key component here, as are Sorey's shimmering cymbal hits and tom rumbles. (482 Music)

CHAD TAYLOR's intellectualized rhythmic approach benefits from work in a wide array of jazz and indie rock situations. *Circle Down* finds Taylor leading a piano trio through a set of progressive originals, his ride slicing up the time and keeping everyone on their toes. And his melodic snares-off solo on "Pablo" is a thing of beauty. (482 Music)

A veteran of the Seattle jazz scene, drummer **FRED TAYLOR** shows off his highly inventive brushwork and agile soloing on *Live At Cecil's*, a CD/DVD combo from 2009. His trio is dynamic, aware, and confident. (fredtaylormusic.com)

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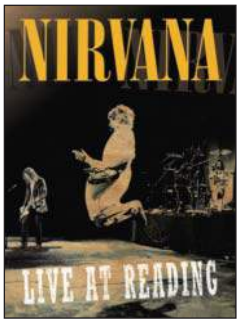

★★★★½

NIRVANA LIVE AT READING

Before he topped the charts with big rock hooks and vocal prowess in Foo Fighters, **DAVE GROHL** pounded out the thunderous beats of a generation's anthems. This live DVD/CD set from England's 1992 Reading Festival captures Nirvana at the height of its powers. From the huge flams of "In Bloom" to the 32nd-note snare barrage of "Territorial Pissings," Grohl's sheer economical power and stamina never let up. Add the ride bell offbeats in "D-7" and the quick kick doubles in the jam of "Love Buzz," and a more complete picture is revealed of one of the all-time great drummers. (Universal Music Group) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

★★★☆☆

YELLOWJACKETS
NEW MORNING:
THE PARIS CONCERT

MARCUS BAYLOR is a titan of dynamic shadings, maneuvering between intricate micro-stickings and high-handed military-style accents, all at the service of the Yellowjackets' Weather Report–derived compositions. Baylor blazes Latin figures on "Aha," drives kinky displacements within the quirky 6/8 of "Capetown," and struts an old-school solo in the acetylene straight-ahead of "Bop Boy." Frenzied ruffs and perfect single-stroke rolls make Baylor a pleasure to watch on "Freedomland" and "Downtown," and he works stunning left-hand leads on "Evening News." Unfortunately, you must sit through some jazz lite to get to the good bits, but Baylor's hot spots are well worth the wait. (Heads Up) **Ken Micallef**

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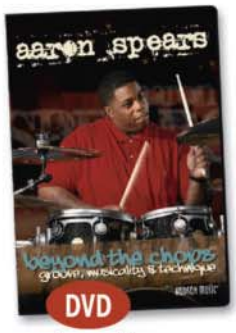
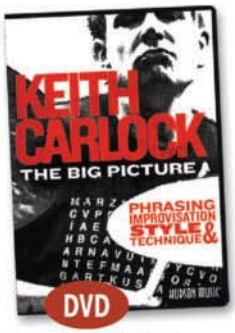
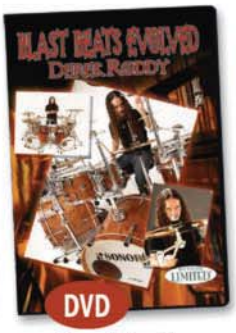


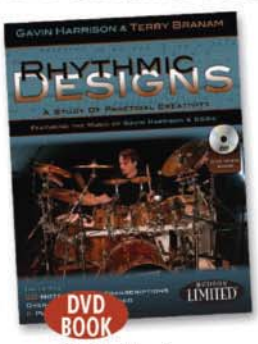
Aaron Spears



Keith Carlock



Derek Roddy



Gavin Harrison

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DRUM ATLAS SERIES

by Martin Patmos

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CUBA BY PETE SWEENEY

★★★★½
SALSA BY PETE SWEENEY

★★★★★
INDIA BY SUNNY JAIN

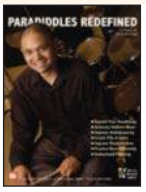
BOOK/CDs LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED $16.95 each

The *Cuba* and *Salsa* books in the Drum Atlas series make quite a nice pair, while the series subtitle, "Your passport to a new world of music," piques your curiosity for what's to come. *Cuba* finds Pete Sweeney discussing traditional rhythms such as cha-cha-cha and rumba, while *Salsa* explores dance rhythms, like son and mambo, that originated from New York City's Latin population. What makes the books stand out is how Sweeney looks at the traditional percussion instruments for these styles and maps their translation to the drumset. This background knowledge clearly shows how and why everything fits together, leading toward more authentic re-creation on the kit. The exercises are accessible and presented without overkill, providing a grounded starting point. There is some overlap between the books, so each can stand alone, but *Cuba* and *Salsa* are among the best instructional texts available for the styles they cover and are well worth seeking out.

The third book in the series is a very welcome addition to instructional literature. Applying Indian rhythms to the drumset is an area with a quietly growing following, yet little information has been available previously. Here, Sunny Jain discusses Indian musical concepts, rhythms both traditional (Hindustani) and modern (Bhangra), and how these rhythmic ideas work on the kit. But perhaps the best feature is Jain's ability to shed light on how Indian musicians *think* about rhythm. As the book is adaptable to rock, jazz, and other styles, drummers interested in all aspects of rhythm, meter, and groove will find it challenging and rewarding. It's an introduction that's certain to open doors. (Alfred)

LICKETY SPLITS

by Michael Dawson



PARADIDDLES REDEFINED FOR DRUM SET BY NUCLEO VEGA

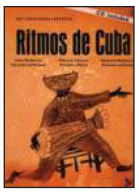
BOOK LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED $19.95

This 112-page book expands the paradiddle from a basic rudiment into an endless idea generator by substituting various musical ideas for each stroke of the RLRR, LRLL sticking. For example, each R can become two 8th notes, while each L is treated as four 16th notes. More advanced concepts, like stick-on-stick rimshots, hand/foot triplets, one-hand sweeps, and cross-stickings, are also filtered through the matrix of the paradiddle. Fun stuff. (Mel Bay)

MASTERING ODD TIME SIGNATURES FOR THE DRUMS BY JOHN SIRANIDIS

BOOK LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED $21.95

This 62-page collection of odd-time grooves, fills, and solos (in 3/4, 5/4, 7/8, 9/8, 11/8, 13/8, and 15/8) provides ambitious drummers with plenty of ideas for exploring beyond the basic 4/4. (johnsiranidisdrumbooks.com.au)



RITMOS DE CUBA: CUBAN RHYTHMS FOR PERCUSSION AND DRUMSET BY RUY LÓPEZ-NUSSA LEKSZYCKI

BOOK/CD LEVEL: ADVANCED $34.95

This package consists of transcriptions of authentic Cuban and Afro-Cuban compositions followed by complete drumset adaptations of each one. Not much explanation is given beyond a few notes on the charts. This is for advanced players looking to dig deep into the various dialects of Cuban music. (Advance Music)

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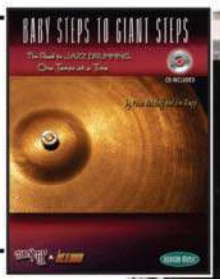
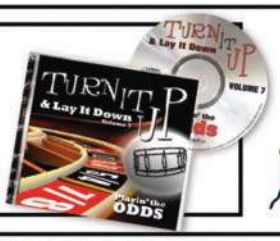


The illusive **Volume 7 "Playin' the Odds,"** a great selection of odd time rock grooves to jam along with, is **now available in stores and on line!**



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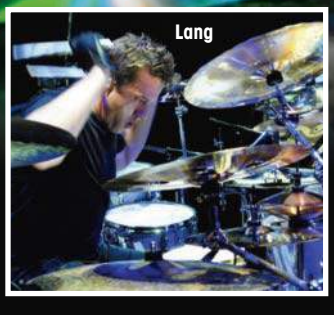
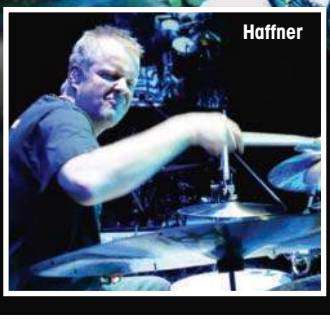
MEINL DRUM FESTIVAL 2009

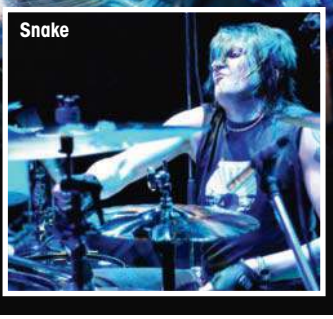
Last June 6, the Meinl Drum Festival took place at the Palace Of Youth in Moscow. It was the first time the show was held outside of Germany. The event was organized by Meinl along with its Russian distributor, O.K. & Co., and drew more than 1,200 attendees. Performing were **Benny Greb**, **Thomas Lang**, **Wolfgang Haffner**, **Mike Terrana**, and **Snake**. For more photos and video, go to meinlcymbals.com. **Photos by Heinz Kronberger**

Greb


Lang


Haffner

Terrana


Snake

MONTREAL DRUM FEST 2009

The seventeenth annual Montreal Drum Festival was held this past October 24 and 25. The all-star show included **Emmanuelle Caplette**, **Moe Carlson** (Protest The Hero), **Jeff Hamilton** (Diana Krall), Duende Con Fusion (flamenco and percussion group), **Karl Perazzo** and **Raul Rekow** (Santana), **Damien Schmitt** (Jean-Luc Ponty), **Lil' John Roberts** (Janet Jackson), **Daniel de los Reyes** and **Luisito Quintero**, **Steve Smith** and **Pete Lockett**, **Cindy Blackman**, Yamaha Groove Hour (featuring **Gerry Brown**, **Ndugu Chancler**, and **Randy Cooke**), **Dennis Chambers** and Victor Wooten, the **Wackerman Brothers** (**John**, **Chad**, and **Brooks**), and others. For more on the event, visit montrealdrumfest.com.

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JAMES "THE REV" SULLIVAN

This past December 28, Avenged Sevenfold drummer James "the Rev" Sullivan passed away at the age of twenty-eight. The band, which is based in Orange County, California, had been planning the recording of its fifth album, the follow-up to 2007's self-titled release.

Sullivan, vocalist M. Shadows, and guitarist Zacky Vengeance formed Avenged Sevenfold in 1999, when they were teenagers, with lead guitarist Synyster Gates and bassist Johnny Christ coming aboard later. The group played metalcore in its early days; by the time 2005's *City Of Evil*, Sevenfold's third LP, came out, the quintet was leaning closer to hard rock and classic metal, and Shadows enforced the music's more melodic, more accessible dimensions by changing from screaming to singing.

The Rev's drumming was marked by sharp precision and a fierce work ethic. But as much as he upped the ante with each new album, it was on stage where the drummer's full power was unleashed. A long, lean presence high atop his double bass arsenal, the Rev thrashed and smashed relentlessly, lashing out at his ride-side China like he was cracking a bullwhip and twirling his sticks through even the most demanding fills. "It's funny, of all my influences, Tommy Lee is a visual influence," he told *Modern Drummer*. "I never thought I'd have one of those."

When *MD* spoke with the Rev for his October 2006 feature, we weren't sure what to expect. Avenged Sevenfold, after all, had earned a serious bad-boy rep, and the members had played their fair share of games with the press. But we found Sullivan to be thoughtful, sincere, funny, and hungry to improve as a player.

Speaking of the separation between the physical immediacy of the stage and the experimental creativity of the practice room, he said, "Just playing your set every night is the best practice ever. You elaborate and improvise a little bit when you're playing live… Then at home, just thinking and tapping and messing around, you come up with the best ideas. You formulate an idea in your head and *then* go practice it—that's when you can tackle really difficult stuff." **Michael Parillo**

Chad Lee

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KIT OF THE MONTH

LET THE WILD RUMPUS START!

This month's kit comes from Jake Burton, who uses it for jazz gigs around his hometown of Nashville. The custom *Where The Wild Things Are* artwork was made by RockenWraps using scanned images from the book by author/illustrator Maurice Sendak.

As far as the drumset, which features Pacific birch shells, Burton converted a 16" tom to a bass drum with the use of a bass drum lift, spurs, and mounting brackets, all by Yamaha. The drums have Yamaha Vintage maple hoops, the 10" rack tom is mounted with the Gauger RIMS system, and the 12" floor tom is floating on a Yamaha DynaHoop. "I put quite a bit of time into this drumset, and I'm *very* happy with the results," Burton says. Indeed, it must feel pretty good to be king of the *Wild Things* kit!

Photo Submission: Digital photos on disk as well as print photos may be sent to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Hi-res digital photos and descriptive text can also be emailed to billya@moderndrummer.com. Show "Kit Of The Month" in the subject line of the message. Photos cannot be returned.

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